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Fig. 1

GB 2 340 979 A

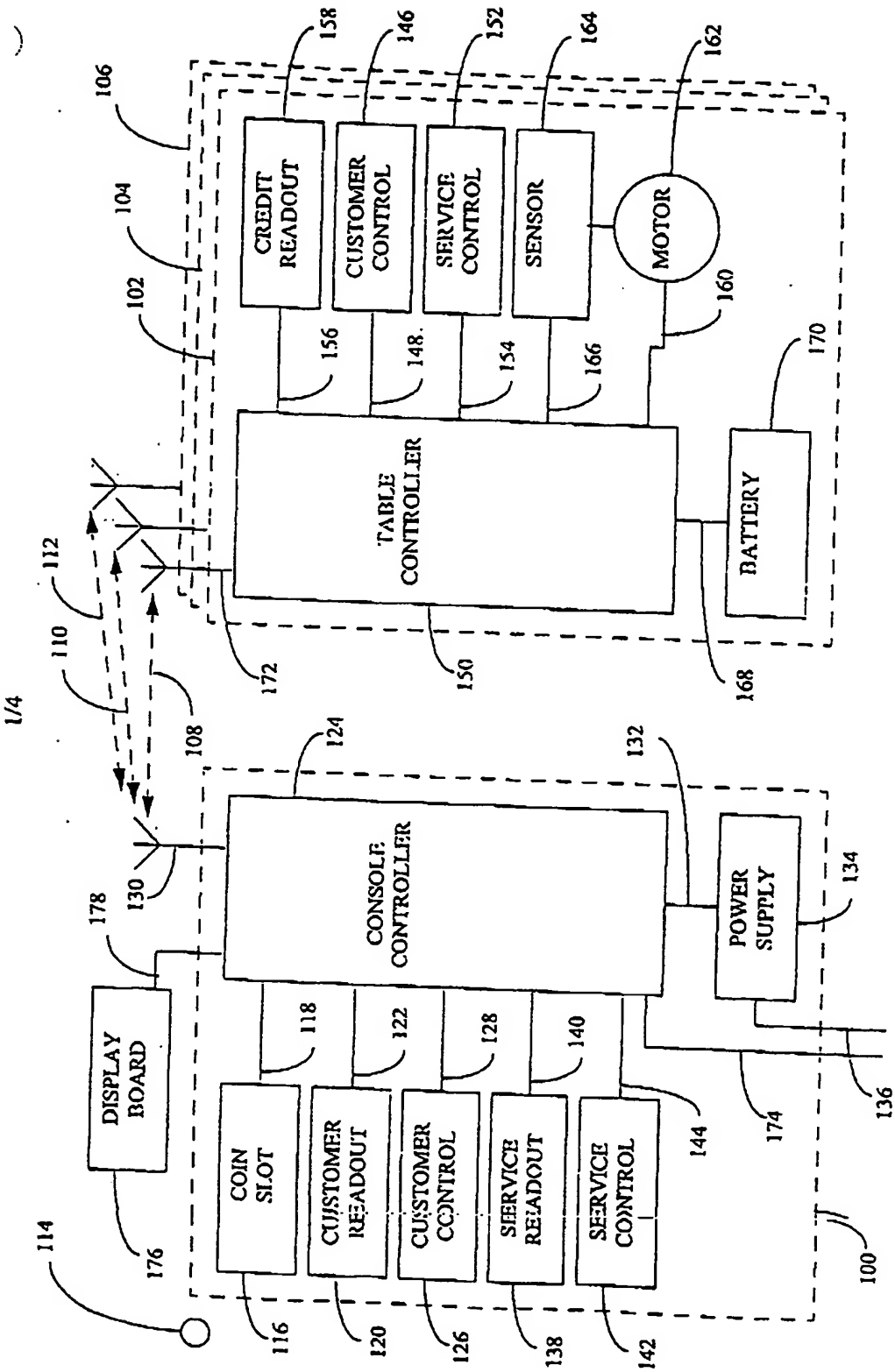


Fig. 1

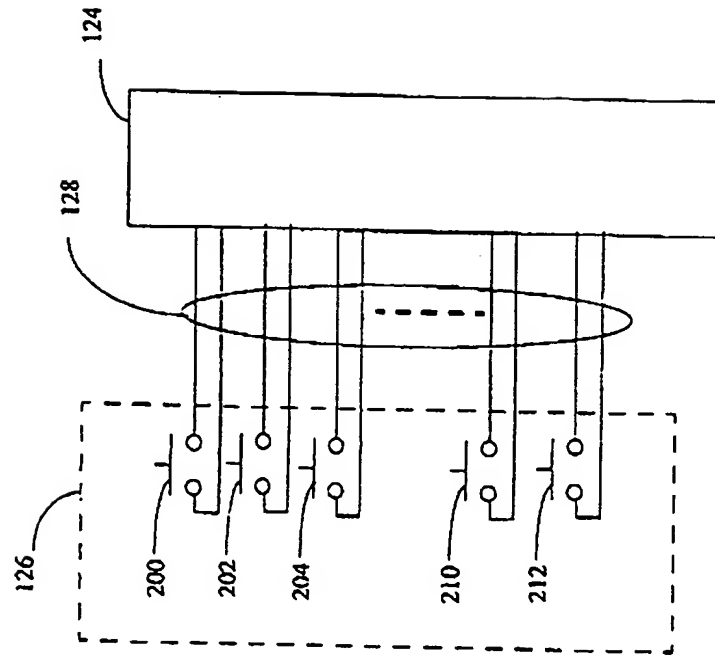


Fig. 2

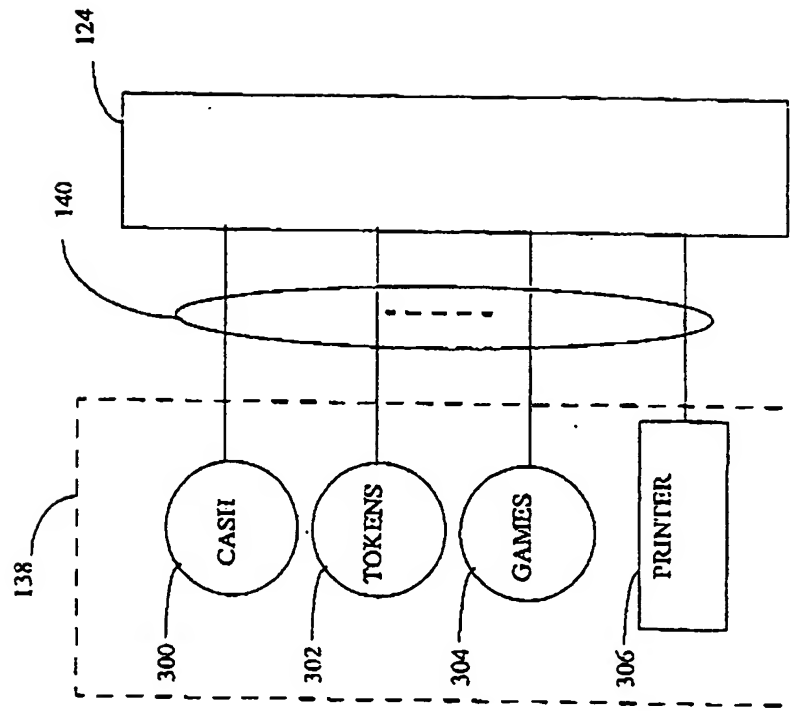


Fig. 3

Fig. 4

GAMING APPARATUS

5

The present invention relates to gaming apparatus, and in one embodiment to an apparatus for remotely enabling a pay-per-play pool table.

Coin operated pool tables first came into being in the 1950's. At that stage, coin operation was implemented by means of a mechanical push-slot, similar in style to that
10 used today in coin-operated laundries. A problem with this solution, was that the coin mechanism was fairly simple, and thus easily defrauded, for example by using a circular disc of metal approximating the required coin.

In order to overcome this problem, electro-mechanical coin mechanisms were then introduced. These mechanisms, incorporating a micro-switch for coin ingress
15 detection, operated a motor or solenoid for ball release, using batteries and a relay system. Although this system was more "intelligent" than the previous purely mechanical systems, fraud was still possible, although not quite as easily as with the mechanical systems.

In about 1993, electronic coin mechanisms became available in Australia, these
20 being far more difficult to defraud by means of counterfeit or imitation coins. These coin mechanisms however, utilise a significant amount of electrical power for their operation. This is a particular problem in the Australian environment, since the existing pool tables using the old-style coin mechanisms utilise batteries built into the structure of the pool table, such batteries being generally inadequate to power the new electronic coin
25 mechanisms for any extended period of time. Furthermore, the Australian ownership structure in regard to pool tables, being one where a gaming equipment operator owns the pool table rather than the owner of the hotel in which the table is situated, does not readily permit the installation of wiring to provide mains power to the table. This mains-wiring

solution has, however, been adopted in the UK, since hotel chains there tend to own the tables themselves.

In Australia, once the electric power problem became evident, the solution adopted by the industry was to minimise the power consumption by powering down the electronic coin acceptor mechanisms, unless in the process of actually accepting a coin. Thus, upon detecting a coin being inserted, the coin mechanism would power up extremely rapidly, process the coin acceptance, and then power down again. The problems with this approach, it has transpired, is that these mechanisms are very sensitive to voltage levels, which is a particular problem given the battery operated nature of the pool tables.

It is an object of the present invention to ameliorate one or more disadvantages of the prior art.

According to one aspect of the invention, there is provided a system for remotely enabling a pool table, the system comprising:

a console located near the table, said console including payment reception means adapted to receive a payment and a console wireless communication means responsive to a payment being made to the payment means,

the pool table including table wireless communication means arranged to communicate with the console wireless communication means and a ball release means responsive to the table wireless communication means, wherein

upon a payment being made to the payment reception means, the console wireless communication means communicates with the table wireless communication means, which enables the ball release means to release balls for play.

According to another aspect of the invention, there is provided a console for remotely enabling a pool table, the console comprising:

payment reception means adapted to receive a payment;

wireless communication means responsive to a payment being made to the payment means, wherein

upon a payment being made to the payment reception means, the console wireless communication means communicates with a table wireless communication means, which enables the table ball release means to release balls for play.

According to another aspect of the invention, there is provided a remotely enabled pool table comprising:

wireless communication means arranged to communicate with a console wireless communication means;

a ball release means responsive to the table wireless communication means, wherein

upon a payment being made to console payment reception means, console wireless communication means communicates with the table wireless communication means, which enables the ball release means to release balls for play.

A further aspect of the invention provides a gaming system, comprising a gaming table and a remote controller, said remote controller being operable to activate said gaming table (preferably upon receipt of a payment).

Embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a block diagram of the system in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the invention.

Fig. 2 presents detail of the console customer control function.

Fig. 3 depicts detail of the console service readout function.

Fig. 4 shows a functional flow chart illustrating console control processes.

Fig. 1 shows an arrangement whereby multiple pool tables 102, 104, 106 are enabled, thus permitting a customer to play at the tables, the enablement being authorised

by a remotely located console 100. This console 100 enables the pool tables 102, 104, 106 by means of radio signals 108, 110, 112 respectively.

A customer wishing to play at one of the tables 102, 104, 106 approaches the authorisation console 100, which is located near the aforementioned group of tables. The customer selects one of the group of tables 102, 104, 106 by means of a customer control 126, which in turn communicates the customer's selection by means of a bus 128 to the console controller 124. The console controller 124 indicates the availability of a table, say, 102, by means of a customer read-out 120, the information being imparted by the console controller 124 by means of a bus 122 to the readout 120. The customer, is informed of the availability of the table 102 on the customer readout 120, and is instructed by the readout 120 to make a specified payment into a coin slot 116. The specified payment may be fixed, or alternatively, programmed by the table owner or franchisee to be a function of time of day, day of week etc.

The customer now deposits a number of coins 114 into a coin slot mechanism 116, which in turn communicates the making of this deposit by means of a bus 118 to the console controller 124 which displays receipt of payment on the readout 120. The customer upon verifying that the correct payment has been registered by the console controller 124 by means of the customer readout 120, confirms the transaction using customer control 126, which communicates this confirmation via bus 128 to the console controller 124. The customer then walks over to the selected table 102 to commence play.

Once the console controller 124 detects by means of the bus 128 and the customer control 126 that the customer has confirmed the transaction, the controller 124 communicates via an antenna 130 and a radio link 108 to a table 102, which receives the radio signal 108 by means of an antenna 172. This signal is then communicated via the antenna 172 to a table controller 150, which by means of a bus 156 displays the number of credits available to the customer on a credit readout 158. The number of credits displayed on the readout 158 will of course be dependent on the number of coins 114 which the customer deposited in the coin slot 116 at the authorisation console 100.

The customer now initiates the beginning of the first game using a customer control 146 at the table 102, this initiation being communicated by a bus 148 to the table controller 150. Controller 150 directs a motor 162 using a control line 160 to release the balls onto the table, whereupon play begins. As each ball is pocketed during the game, the ball is directed from the pocket by means of a chute to a central ball collection area. A sensor 164 is arranged to distinguish the fifteenth pocketed ball, which signals the end of the game, and signals detection of this fifteenth ball by means of a bus 166 to the table controller 150. The controller 150 then decrements the amount of credit remaining, and indicates the new credit amount on the credit readout 158 by means of a bus 156. The customer initiates the next game by means of the customer control 146.

Play continues in the aforementioned manner, the amount of credit remaining indicated by the credit readout 158 and the amount being decremented each game, until no credit remains. While credit remains, as indicated by the readout 158, the customer is able to initiate new games by means of the customer control 146.

In regard to the aspect of electrical power, the remote console 100 is powered by means of a power supply 134 through a line 132, which power supply 134 is in turn connected to a mains supply by means of a cable 136. The remote console 100 therefore is, in the present embodiment, powered by mains supply voltage. In contrast, the table 102 is powered by an on-board battery 170, via a line 168. Since all functions not essential for operation of the table 102 such as the coin slot 116 are now located at the remote console 100, the demands upon the table battery 170 are significantly reduced, resulting in a longer battery life, and better system reliability and performance.

Having described the system from the customer perspective, it is noted that the embodiment also makes provision for control functions for the table owner both at the console 100 and at the various tables 102, 104, 106. Thus, the owner may calibrate a system clock, set a base credit unit which represents the money value increment upon which the cost of games is based, change the basic price which is a multiple of the aforementioned base credit unit and so on, using a service control function 142, which is connected to the console controller 124 by means of a bus 144. The owner also has

access to a service readout function 138 which is connected to the console controller 124 by means of a bus 140. Related service functions may be performed at each table 102, 104, 106 by means of the service control function 152 which is connected via a bus 154 to the table controller 150.

5 The console controller 124 also has a modem capability or alternatively, a data communication capability, based on a communication standard such as RS 232, by which communication may be established to an external network by means of a line 174. This communication function facilitates remote control and/or monitoring of the console 100 and tables 102, 104 and 106. Furthermore, remote diagnostic monitoring of the console
10 100 and tables 102, 104, 106 is possible, enabling early detection of faults, and rapid dispatch of service personnel to effect repairs. In very large pool table complexes, the communication function allows central control of numerous clusters of tables/consoles, each cluster comprising, say, a console 100 and a number of associated tables 102, 104, 106.

15 A display board 176 is connected to the console controller 124 by a line 178. The display board 176 displays information of general interest to patrons using the pool tables. Such information includes, for example, announcements on upcoming pool tournaments, participants therein, and other such information relating, perhaps, to the club premises. The information displayed on the display board 176 is communicated to the
20 console controller 124 by means of the communication line 174. The aforementioned information can be stored in the console controller 124, or alternatively, it can be conveyed directly to the display board 176, and stored therein. The display board 176 is implemented, in the present embodiment, using Light Emitting Diodes (LED's).

Fig. 2 presents in more detail the console customer control function 126
25 described previously in Fig. 1. The customer control function 126 is seen to comprise table selection buttons 200, 202, 204 ... for the tables 102, 104, 106 ..., and also a confirm button 212 by which the customer confirms the transaction after verifying that correct payment has been registered on the console customer readout 120 as described above.

These various customer control elements are connected to the console controller 124 by means of a bus 128.

Fig. 3 depicts detail about the console service readout function 138. This function comprises three electromechanical non resettable meters, one meter 300 indicating total cash taken, one meter 302 indicating total tokens taken, and one meter 304 indicating total games played. These electromechanical meters are cumulative, and non resettable, thus providing a whole-of-life cumulative indication for the console 100 in which they are mounted. Furthermore, the service readout function 138 also includes a printer 306 which is used by the table owner to provide information such as daily takings, games played and so on.

Fig. 4 shows a functional flow chart which illustrates how the table owner may either change operating parameters or exercise control functions at the console 100 by means of service control function 142 and service readout function 138. Step 400 shows that the console controller 124 continuously monitors whether the lockable console front door is unlocked and open. This door protects console equipment, while making available to table customers the customer control function 126, the customer readout 120, and the coin slot mechanism 116. If the console controller 124 detects that the door has been unlocked and opened, it inhibits the service meters in a process step 402, in order to stop the accumulation of cash, tokens, and games information while the console is being serviced. Thereafter, the owner selects either a "change parameter" function or a "control" function by means of a step 414. If a "change parameter" function is chosen, the process is routed to a step 404, whereby the owner selects the particular control functions to be adjusted. Thereafter, a step 406 enables the particular function parameter to be adjusted. Next, a step 408 enables either further changes to be made by routing the process back to the select control function 404, or alternatively, enables the owner to exit the routine by routing the process to a step 410 which ensures that the door is closed and locked prior to enabling the service meters at a step 412. The process reverts to step 400 at this point, whereby the console controller 124 again continuously monitors whether the

door is unlocked and open. A typical change parameter function could, for example, be to change the price per game on a time of day basis.

If the owner wishes to exercise a "control" function, and wants, for example, to obtain a daily readout of cash takings etc., the process inhibits service meters at step 402 after door unlocking and opening is detected at step 400, however this time the operator selects the "control" option at step 414, whereafter the process is routed to a select control function 416. At this point, for example, the operator might select a "Print Daily Cash Takings" function. Thereafter, the operator activates the function at a step 418, resulting, in this case, in a printout from printer 306 (Ref: Fig. 3). Further control options can be selected at a step 420, which then routes the process back to step 416 which enables selection of further control functions. Alternatively the owner may exit the routine, whereby the process is routed to the step 410 which again requires that the door be closed and locked before enabling service meters at the step 412 prior to returning to the door monitoring step 400.

The foregoing describes only a particular embodiment of the present invention, and modifications, obvious to those skilled in the art, can be made thereto without departing from the scope of the present invention.

For example, the aforementioned description details use of radio communication from the console controller 124 via the antenna 130 and the radio link 108 to the table 102 where the communication is received by means of the antenna 172, and routed through to the table controller 150. Instead of radio communication, use could easily be made, for example, of infrared communications instead.

Furthermore, although the aforementioned description is based upon payment by means of coins 114 inserted into the coin slot 116, payment could equally be made by means of credit cards or smart cards being inserted into or swiped through an appropriate card reader.

Furthermore, it is also conceivable that the teachings provided herein could be applied to other gaming systems (for example, snooker or table football), and that the arrangement described could be operated without requiring payment as a means for limiting the amount of time any one person can use a given table, for example.

CLAIMS

- 5 1. A system for remotely enabling a pool table, the system comprising:
 a console located near the table, said console including payment reception means
 adapted to receive a payment and a console wireless communication means responsive to
 a payment being made to the payment means,
 the pool table including table wireless communication means arranged to
10 communicate with the console wireless communication means and a ball release means
 responsive to the table wireless communication means, wherein
 upon a payment being made to the payment reception means, the console
 wireless communication means communicates with the table wireless communication
 means, which enables the ball release means to release balls for play.
- 15
2. A system according to claim 1 wherein:
 the pool table is one of a plurality of like remotely enabled individually
 selectable pool tables,
 the console includes table selection means adapted to select a desired table from
20 the plurality of tables,
 the console wireless communication means are arranged to be responsive to the
 table selection, whereby
 upon selection of the desired table and payment being made to the payment
 reception means, the console wireless communication means communicates with the
25 corresponding table wireless communication means which enables the corresponding ball
 release means to release balls for play.
3. A system according to claim 1, wherein the wireless communications
 uses a radio transmission medium.

4. A system according to claim 1, wherein the wireless communications uses an optical transmission medium.

5. A system according to claim 1, wherein the payment is one of a programmable fixed payment, a payment programmed as a function of a time of day, and a payment programmed as a function of a day of week.

6. A system according to claim 1, wherein the payment results in a number of credits being allocated, said number of credits being decremented at the completion of a game.

7. A system according to claim 1, wherein equipment in the console is powered by mains power, and equipment in the table is powered by battery.

8. A system according to claim 1, wherein console control parameters and table control parameters are controlled remotely by means of an external console communication connection.

9. A system according to claim 1, wherein console monitoring parameters and table monitoring parameters are monitored remotely by means of an external console communication connection.

10. A system according to claim 1, wherein the console further includes one or more electromechanical non-resettable meters.

11. A system according to claim 1, further comprising a programmable announcement board responsive to a signal from the console.

12. A system according to claim 11, wherein the console signal is dependent upon a signal received by the console using an external communication link.

13. A system according to claim 1, wherein payment is made using one or
5 more coins.

14. A system according to claim 1, wherein payment is made using a credit card or a smart card.

10 15. A console for remotely enabling a pool table, the console comprising:
payment reception means adapted to receive a payment;
wireless communication means responsive to a payment being made to the
payment means, wherein
upon a payment being made to the payment reception means, the console
15 wireless communication means communicates with a table wireless communication
means, which enables the table ball release means to release balls for play.

16. A remotely enabled pool table comprising:
wireless communication means arranged to communicate with a console wireless
20 communication means;
a ball release means responsive to the table wireless communication means,
wherein
upon a payment being made to console payment reception means, console
wireless communication means communicates with the table wireless communication
25 means, which enables the ball release means to release balls for play.

17. A gaming system, comprising a gaming table and a remote controller, said remote controller being operable to activate said gaming table (preferably upon receipt of a payment).

- ;
18. A remote controller suitable for use with the system of Claim 17.
19. A gaming table suitable for use with the system of Claim 17.
- 5 20. A system substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.
21. A console substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.
- 10 22. A pool table substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.



Application No: GB 9919581.0
Claims searched: 1-22

Examiner: Dave McMunn
Date of search: 24 November 1999

Patents Act 1977
Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.Q): G4V (VAA, VAB, VAC).

Int Cl (Ed.6): G07F 17/32, 17/38.

Other: ONLINE : WPI, EPODOC, JAPIO.

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
X, Y	GB 2,209,861 A (BARCREST). See Figs & lines 1-5, page 3	X:1,4-7,13,14-19 Y:3,8,9,12
X, Y	GB 2,181,590 A (BARCREST). See Figs & lines 71-81, page 1	X:1,4-7,13,14-19 Y:3,8,9,12
Y	GB 2,204,234 A (BARCREST). See Figs	3,8,9,12
Y	GB 1,121,002 (ORBIT ENG). See lines 89-95, page 2	3
X	WO 94/25126 A1 (OPSAL). See e.g. line 12, page 3	1,4,7,11,14-19
X	WO 94/04995 A1 (TIME FRAME). See e.g. claim 7	1,4,7,11,14-19

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
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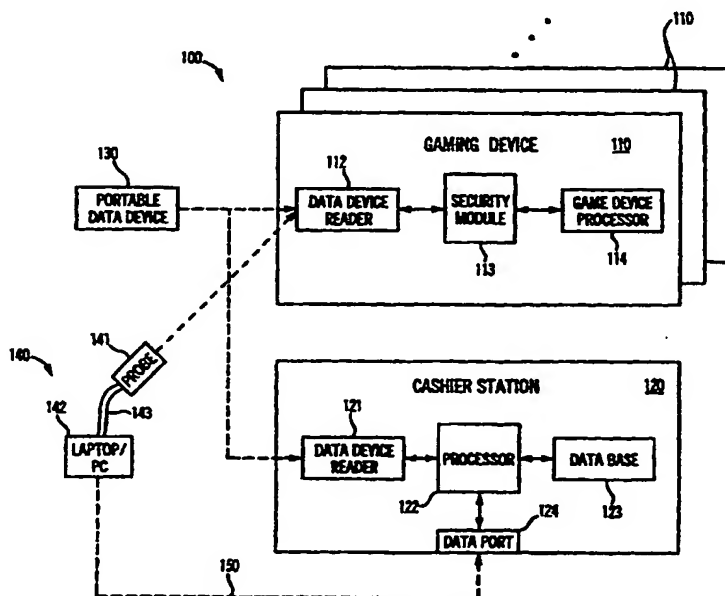
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(54) Title: METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR SECURE CASHLESS GAMING



(57) Abstract: A secure cashless gaming system comprises a plurality of gaming devices which may or may not be connected to a central host network. Each gaming device includes an intelligent data device reader which is uniquely associated with a security module interposed between the intelligent data device reader and the gaming device processor. A portable data device bearing credits is used to allow players to play the various gaming devices. When a portable data device is presented to the gaming device, it is authenticated before a gaming session is allowed to begin. The intelligent data device reader in each gaming device monitors gaming transactions and stores the results for later readout in a secure format by a portable data extraction unit, or else for transfer to a central host network. Gaming transaction data may be aggregated by the portable data extraction unit

from a number of different gaming devices, and may be transferred to a central accounting and processing system for tracking the number of remaining gaming credits for each portable data unit and/or player. Individual player habits can be monitored and tracked using the aggregated data. The intelligent data device reader may be programmed to automatically transfer gaming credits from a portable data device to the gaming device, and continually refresh the credits each time they drop below a certain minimum level, thus alleviating the need for the player to manually enter an amount of gaming credits to transfer to the gaming device.

S P E C I F I C A T I O NTITLE OF THE INVENTION

5 METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR SECURE CASHLESS GAMING

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTIONField of the Invention

10 The field of the present invention relates to gaming devices and systems and, more particularly, to secure cashless gaming devices and systems utilizing portable data storage devices such as smartcards.

Background

15 Casinos and gaming establishments have traditionally relied upon coin-operated gaming devices. Such coin-operated gaming devices have a number of drawbacks or limitations. For example, they generally require customers to carry around large numbers of coins, which can be inconvenient or burdensome to customers. Also, the only type of feedback they provide to the machine owner is the raw number of coins
20 played and paid out. Thus, coin-operated gaming devices have no way to track the type of customers using the machines. Such information, if available, could be of significant value to the casinos and gaming establishments.

 To increase the convenience to customers, and to make an attempt at tracking game machine use by individual customers, casinos and gaming establishments have for
25 a number of years sought to provide a cashless gaming system, whereby the customers do not have to play the machines using coins and hence need not carry around large quantities of coins. Some proposed systems, for example, allow customers to use gaming establishment credit cards to transfer playing credits to, and retrieve unused credits from, a particular gaming machine. A similar proposed system allows use of a
30 player-carried device such as a magnetic-stripe card to allow customers to use coin-

operated game devices by paying a lump sum in lieu of using individual coins. Such a system is described, for example, in U.S. Patent No. 4,575,622.

Yet another proposed approach is described in U.S. Patent No. 5,179,517, which discloses a system in which a credit account for a particular customer is maintained on a portable data carrier commonly known as a "smart card." A smart card is a device generally in the size and shape of a standard credit card, encapsulating solid-state memory, circuitry for allowing the memory to be read from or written to, and, in certain cards, microprocessor circuitry for performing various programmable functions. Smart cards may be equipped with an interface having electrical contacts which make a physical connection with a smart card reader, or else may be equipped with a radio frequency (RF) interface to allow a smart card reader to interact with the smart card electronic circuitry over an RF communication link. A standard (ISO) protocol has been developed within the smart card industry for communicating between smart cards and smart card readers.

Cashless gaming systems are most often deployed in an environment in which the various gaming devices are all connected to and controlled by a central computer, which serves as the host for a local area network, and such systems are referred to as "on-line" systems. While on-line gaming systems have certain advantages such as centralized control and player tracking capability, they can create a "bottleneck" at the central computer when too many transactions need to be processed due, for example, to the number of on-line gaming devices being played simultaneously. On-line gaming systems are also more expensive than so-called "off-line" gaming devices, which are not directly tied to a host computer or a network. One probable reason that most cashless gaming systems have been developed for on-line (rather than off-line) gaming devices is because of the ability of the central computer to account for changes to the player's account and the machine's payment in/payment out during play, by instantly adjusting accounting data relating to the player and/or the gaming device which is being played. Accurate centralized accounting is highly important, because when machines can be played with coins or with credit (via a cashless technique), the number of coins in and out will not necessarily reflect the total intake or payout of a gaming device. Rather, the influx of

cashless "credits" in a gaming device would, in the absence of careful monitoring, cause a discrepancy in the accounting for each gaming device. In an on-line gaming system, each bet and each pay-out is typically run through the central computer, which is thereby able to keep a running account of the monetary balance at each gaming device.

5 On the other hand, such a capability does not exist with off-line gaming devices, since they are not connected to a central computer. Accounting for off-line machines is usually conducted by manually checking various meters at the gaming device. When the number of off-line machines is large, meter checking can be a long and tedious process. It can also be inconvenient to the casinos or gaming establishments, as it requires that
10 the gaming devices be taken off line for a certain period of time during meter checking activity.

 While cashless gaming techniques have been proposed for off-line gaming devices, such techniques are inadequate from a security and accounting standpoint. A major potential security problem is the possibility of theft of cashless data unit (e.g.,
15 smart card) readers, particularly by employees of the casinos or gaming establishments. In this regard, it may be noted that a high percentage of casino theft is estimated to be caused by internal company employees. With a stolen data unit reader, an individual can illegally add money in the form of credits to one or more cashless data units. The individual could then "cash out" the amount of credit on the cashless data units, without
20 the casino or gaming establishment being aware that the money was illegally added to the cashless data units. The possibility of such covert action puts casinos and gaming establishments at untoward risk of being bilked of large amounts of money. This possibility is generally not present in an on-line system, which requires all transactions to be processed through the central computer.

25 Another drawback of conventional off-line gaming devices is that they are generally incapable of providing the same level of accounting and targeted player feedback as on-line gaming systems. With conventional techniques, there is no practical and viable way for casinos and gaming establishments issuing portable data units (such as smart cards) to determine their outstanding liability on a given portable data unit.
30 Also, there is no practical and viable way to obtain accurate, timely and comprehensive

information as to the playing habits of individual players, which, as noted, could be of significant value to casinos and gaming establishments.

There is a need for a cashless gaming system particularly well suited for off-line gaming devices. There is further a need for a cashless gaming system which provides
5 increased security for off-line gaming devices. There is further a need for such a cashless gaming system which allows rapid and convenient accounting for off-line gaming devices, and which allows information to be gathered concerning the playing habits of individual players. There is also a need for a cashless gaming system that reduces the probability of bottlenecks occurring at the central computer in an on-line
10 gaming system, and further for such a system which can provide an increased level of security for on-line gaming devices.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention provides in one aspect systems, methods and techniques for secure
15 cashless gaming which can be used with off-line or on-line gaming devices. In one or more embodiments, gaming credits are stored on portable data devices such as smart cards, which can be presented to gaming devices in a cashless gaming environment to allow players to use the gaming devices.

In one embodiment, a secure cashless gaming system comprises a plurality of
20 gaming devices which may or may not be connected to a central host network. Each gaming device preferably includes an intelligent data device reader which is uniquely associated with a security module interposed between the intelligent data device reader and the gaming device processor. A portable data device (such as a smart card) bearing credits is used to allow players to play the various gaming devices. When a portable
25 data device is presented to the gaming device, it is authenticated before a gaming session is allowed to begin. The intelligent data device reader in each gaming device monitors gaming transactions and preferably stores the results for later readout in a secure format by a portable data extraction unit, or else for transfer to a central host network. Gaming transaction data may be aggregated by the portable data extraction unit from a number of
30 different gaming devices, and may be transferred to a central accounting and processing

system for tracking the number of remaining gaming credits for each portable data unit and/or player. Individual player habits can be monitored and tracked using the aggregated data.

In another embodiment, a gaming device includes an intelligent data device reader which is uniquely associated with a security module interposed between the intelligent data device reader and the gaming device processor. Each time an attempt is made to initiate a gaming session (by, e.g., presenting a portable data device such as a smart card), and periodically thereafter, if desired, an authentication process is performed to ensure that the correct intelligent data device reader and the correct security module are present. If one or the other is missing, then the player will be unable to utilize the gaming device, and the portable data device will not be updated.

The intelligent data device reader may, in certain embodiments, be programmed to automatically transfer gaming credits from a portable data device inserted in the intelligent data device reader to the gaming device. Each time the number of credits falls below a predetermined minimum level, the intelligent data device reader may be programmed to transfer a given number of additional gaming credits to the gaming device, thus alleviating the need for the player to manually enter an amount of gaming credits to transfer to the gaming device.

Further embodiments, variations and enhancements of the invention are also described herein.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a block diagram of a secure cashless gaming system in accordance with a preferred embodiment as described herein.

Fig. 2 is a block diagram of an intelligent data device reader as may be used in the secure cashless gaming system shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 is a block diagram of a security module as may be used in the secure cashless gaming system shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 4 is a process flow chart of a cross-authentication procedure as may be carried out between an intelligent data device reader and a security module of the secure cashless gaming system shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 5 is a conceptual diagram illustrating the different interfaces among some of the primary components for one embodiment in accordance with the secure cashless gaming system shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 6 is a diagram of a data extraction device such as may be used in the secure cashless gaming system shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 7 is a diagram of a portion of a transaction list file format.

Figs. 8A – 8E are diagrams illustrating the format of records which may be included in the transaction list file transmitted from a data device reader to a data extraction device.

Fig. 9 is a block diagram illustrating processing of transaction data extracted from a data device reader.

Fig. 10 is a diagram of a secure cashless gaming system illustrating interactions between players and the various components of the gaming system.

Fig. 11 is a diagram of a gaming device system wherein on-line gaming devices having intelligent data device readers are connected to a centralized network

Fig. 12 is a diagram illustrating one manner of connecting a gaming device to a centralized network in accordance with one embodiment as disclosed herein.

Fig. 13 is a diagram illustrating another manner of connecting a gaming device to a centralized network, in accordance with another embodiment as disclosed herein.

Fig. 14 is a block diagram of a preferred security and authentication module usable in various embodiments of an intelligent data device reader.

Fig. 15 is a diagram of a portable data device, illustrating the information storage format for the portable data device.

Fig. 16 is a flow chart diagram illustrating from a global perspective the operation of a gaming system in accordance with a preferred embodiment as described herein.

Fig. 17 is a conceptual diagram illustrating the different interfaces among some of the primary components for an alternative embodiment in accordance with the secure cashless gaming system shown in Fig. 1.

Figs. 18 – 21 are additional flow chart diagrams illustrating the operation of a gaming system in accordance with an embodiment as described herein.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Fig. 1 is a block diagram of a secure cashless gaming system 100 in accordance with a preferred embodiment as described herein. As illustrated in Fig. 1, the secure cashless gaming system 100 comprises one or more gaming devices 110, a cashier station 120 and a data extraction device 140 which collectively provide for secure cashless gaming activity by an arbitrary number of players on various gaming devices 110, the ability to securely and accurately monitor the gaming activity at each of the gaming devices, and the ability, if desired, to track individual player gaming habits. In the typical environment which is contemplated, a large number of gaming devices 110 (in the order of tens or hundreds) may be included in the cashless gaming system 100, but the principles and concepts described herein do not depend upon any particular number of gaming devices 110 being utilized in the cashless gaming system 100.

As further illustrated in Fig. 1, each gaming device 110 preferably comprises an intelligent data device reader 112, a security module 113 connected to the intelligent data device reader 112, and a game device processor 114 connected to the security module 113. The cashier station 120 preferably comprises a data device reader 121, a cashier station processor 122 connected to the data device reader 121, and a database 123 accessible to the cashier station processor 122. The cashier station 120 also may comprise a data port 124 for receiving data from the data extraction device 140, or alternatively may comprise a disk drive (not shown) or other media reading device for receiving information from the data extraction device 140 via a portable storage medium (e.g., disk).

In an exemplary embodiment, the gaming devices 110 are off-line machines, in that they need not be connected to a central computer for handling each wagering

transaction. However, it will be apparent that various concepts and principles of the secure cashless gaming system 100 illustrated in Fig. 1 would be applicable to gaming devices in an on-line gaming environment as well, and thus, in certain alternative embodiments, the gaming devices 110 may be on-line machines.

5 As will be described in further detail herein, a player utilizes a portable data device 130 to obtain gaming credit, and to expend the credit in the various gaming devices 110, while the system operator uses the data extraction device 140 to extract data from the gaming devices 110 concerning player wagers, winnings and other information about gaming sessions. In a preferred embodiment, the portable data device 130
10 comprises a smart card, which, as previously noted in the Background section herein, is a device generally in the size and shape of a standard credit card, encapsulating solid-state memory, circuitry for allowing the memory to be read from or written to, and, in a preferred embodiment as described herein, microprocessor circuitry for performing various programmable functions. As also noted previously, smart cards may be
15 equipped with an interface having electrical contacts which make a physical connection with a smart card reader, or else, alternatively, may be equipped with a radio frequency (RF) interface to allow a smart card reader to interact with the smart card electronic circuitry over an RF communication link. Techniques for manufacturing smart cards, and for communicating between a smart card and a smart card reader via either physical
20 contacts or an RF communication link, are well known and conventional.

 Alternatively, rather than a smart card, the portable data device 130 may comprise another type of data storage and retrieval unit. An embodiment in which the portable data device 130 comprises a smart card is preferred, however, because of the ability, with on-board microprocessor circuitry, to imbue the smart card with
25 intelligence, thereby facilitating some of the security and other features described elsewhere herein. Accordingly, the portable data device 130 may occasionally be assumed herein to be a smart card, and the data device readers 112 and 121 would in such a case be assumed to be smart card readers, as further described herein.
Alternative data storage and retrieval units used instead of smart cards preferably have

built-in intelligence in the form of programmable microprocessor circuitry or the equivalent, to carry out the security and other features described elsewhere herein.

Prior to using a gaming device, the player first obtains gaming credit on the portable data device (e.g., smart card) 130 by providing the portable data device 130 to the cashier station 120. Typically, this might be done by the player handing the portable data device 130 to a cashier (an employee of the casino or gaming establishment), who would be responsible for inserting the portable data device 130 in the data device reader 121 (which, if the portable data device 130 is a smart card, would take the form of a smart card reader). The cashier would then issue gaming credit to the portable data device 130, and collect an appropriate cash or payment from the player. In a typical embodiment of the cashier station 120, the cashier is presented with a screen interface (not shown), and can select among a number of options, one of which is adding gaming credit to the current portable data device 130. The cashier station 120 is preferably configured with a keyboard, keypad or other data input device (not shown), so as to allow the cashier to select the desired amount of gaming credit to add to the portable data device 130. When the player is finished gaming and wants to redeem (i.e., "cash out"), the data device reader 121 may read the amount of credit left on the portable data device 130, and display the amount of credit left on the screen for the cashier to read. The cashier may then select an option of deleting the remaining gaming credit on the portable data device 130, and may disburse cash or other form of payment to the player. In some embodiments, the portable data device 130 may have a programmed "retain value" which cannot be used for gaming, but is redeemable at the cashier station 120 to encourage the player to return the portable data device 130 when all of the available credit has been exhausted.

In addition to storing gaming credit, each portable data device 130 also preferably includes a player identification code, which allows the card to be correlated to a particular individual or entity. The player identification code is used for accounting purposes when information about particular gaming sessions is extracted from the gaming devices 110.

Fig. 15 is a diagram of a portable data device as may be used in the system shown in Fig. 1 or the various other embodiments herein, illustrating the information storage format for the portable data device. As shown in Fig. 15, a portable data device 1500 (which may, for example, comprise a smart card) comprises an identify file 1505 which stores identification and other information concerning the player and issuing gaming establishment, a keys file 1510 containing the secret keys for performing authentication checks, a transaction log file 1515 for storing data from the last gaming transactions (e.g., last 40 transactions), and a session log file 1520 storing data from the last gaming sessions (e.g., last 40 sessions).

Once gaming credit has been placed on a portable data device 130, the player may take the portable data device 130 to any of the gaming devices 110 and utilize them in a manner generally similar to coin-operated gaming devices, but only requiring a single simple act on the part of the player to obtain gaming credit on the gaming device 110. The player inserts the portable data device 130 into the intelligent data device reader 112, which communicates with the portable data device 130 over a communication link, such as is conventionally done with smart cards and smart card readers. According to well known communication protocols used with smart cards and smart card readers, data may be transmitted from the portable data device 130 to the data device reader 112 over the communication link (either with physical electrical contacts or an RF connection), and may likewise be transmitted from the data device reader 112 to the portable data device 130 over the communication link.

When the player inserts the portable data device 130 into the intelligent data device reader 112, the gaming device 110 validates the portable data device using a security module 113. If the portable data device 130 comprises a smart card, then the intelligent data device reader 112 preferably takes the form of an "intelligent" smart card reader, as further described herein. In a preferred embodiment, details of which are provided later herein, the intelligent data device reader 112 and security module 113 perform a cross-authentication check at the start of each new gaming session, and periodically during each gaming session. In such an embodiment, a gaming session is not enabled unless the cross-authentication check is passed without error.

In a preferred embodiment, the intelligent data device reader 112 and the security module 113 are uniquely associated with one another, such that the intelligent data device reader 112 will only operate with the security module 113 uniquely associated with it, and the security module 113 will only allow authentication of the intelligent data device reader 112 uniquely associated with it. Thus, an intelligent data device reader 112 which has been removed from its gaming device 110 will not be operable because its attempt to cross-authenticate with the associated security module 113 will result in a failure. Similarly, an intelligent data device reader 112 that is removed from one gaming device 110 and inserted in a different gaming device 110 will not be operable, because its attempt to cross-authenticate with the proper security module 113 will lead to an error. The security module 113 is preferably fastened securely to the gaming device 110 so that its removal is made as difficult as possible. For example, the security module 113 may take the form of an integrated circuit (i.e., chip) on a small printed circuit board, attached to the interior housing of the gaming device 110 by cabling passing through the printed circuit board, or by any other suitable means. Alternatively, the security module 113 may be integrated with the same electronic circuitry as the game device processor 114. In such a case, the random number generator used by the gaming device may also be incorporated within the security module 113, to prevent gaming from occurring without proper authentication. Placing the random number generator within the security module 113 also provides the capability of generating an electronic signature that allows verification of the authenticity of a jackpot (whether the gaming device 110 is in cash mode or cashless mode).

In addition to performing a cross-authentication check, the gaming device 110 also runs a validation test to ensure that the inserted portable data device 130 has been issued by an authorized casino or gaming establishment.

If the cross-authentication check passes, and if the portable data device 130 is determined to be valid, the gaming session is allowed to take place. The intelligent data device reader 112 reads the gaming credit on the card, and transfers part of the gaming credit to the game device processor 114. The security module 113 acts as a pass-through channel, allowing the intelligent data device reader 112 and the game device

processor 114 to communicate freely, so long as the periodic cross-authentication checks are passed without error. The intelligent data device reader 112 stores gaming session information, such as the amount of gaming credit transferred in for the particular session, the amount played for the session, the amount won for the session, and the amount paid out for the session. The intelligent data device reader 112 stores the player identification code along with the gaming session information. A preferred set of information stored by the intelligent data device reader 112 is described hereafter in relation to Figs. 8A – 8E.

Each player can, using a single portable data device 130, play as many of the gaming devices 110 as desired, so long as the portable data device 130 has gaming credit available. Likewise, each gaming device 110 is capable of accepting portable data devices 130 from as many players as desire to play the gaming device 110. For each player, the gaming device 110 stores information pertaining to the player's gaming session.

At periodic intervals, which may be once each day or once every set number of days (primarily dependent upon the level of usage of the gaming devices 110), the gaming session information stored in the intelligent data device readers 112 of the various gaming devices 110 is extracted and delivered to a central accounting and processing system (an example of which is shown in Fig. 9 and discussed later herein). In a preferred embodiment, a data extraction device 140 is utilized to collect the gaming session information stored in the intelligent data device readers 112 of the various gaming devices 110. The data extraction device 140 preferably comprises a probe 141 connected to a portable high-volume memory storage device 142, which may simply be a laptop, personal computer, or a custom piece of equipment. The probe 141 is constructed in the size and shape of a smart card, and is configured with a smart card interface, including circuitry for communicating over the communication link between the probe 141 and the intelligent data device reader 112. When the probe 141 is inserted into the intelligent data device reader 112, the same type of validation and cross-authentication checks as described with reference to the portable data device 130 may, if desired, be carried out to ensure that the probe 141 is associated with an authorized data

extraction device 140, and to ensure that the data device reader 112 is associated with the proper security module 113.

Once the validation and cross-authentication checks, if any, are carried out, a user of the data extraction device 140 may, using predefined buttons, a keypad, or user interface of any sort, instruct the intelligent data device reader 112 to transfer the collected gaming session data to the data extraction device 140. In response to such an instruction, the intelligent data device reader 112 downloads its collected gaming session information, and possibly other information (such as the number of incidents or mishaps), across the communication link to the data extraction device 140, via the probe 141. The type of data that may be transferred is described in more detail later herein with reference to Figs. 7 and 8A – 8E. Among other things, the data extraction device 140 obtains gaming session information for each player that has played the gaming device 110 since the last time the data was extracted from the gaming device.

The operator of the casino or gaming establishment proceeds in a similar manner with the relevant gaming devices 110, collecting gaming session information en masse from all of the gaming devices 110 which are a part of the secure cashless gaming system 100. After gaming session data is read out from a particular gaming device 110, the gaming session memory for the intelligent data device reader 112 may be cleared, or, alternatively, the gaming session memory may be re-circulated, with new gaming session information as it comes in overwriting the oldest gaming session information. In the latter case, should the extracted gaming session information be lost for whatever reason, it can be reconstructed by re-reading the data preserved in the gaming session memory of the intelligent data device reader 112.

Once the aggregate gaming session information has been obtained from the various gaming devices 110, the data extraction device 140 may be connected to a central accounting and processing database (e.g., database 123), through, for example, a physical cable connection to a data port 124 located at the cashier station 120 or elsewhere at the host system. Alternatively, the gaming session data may be transposed from the data extraction device 140 to a portable, permanent storage medium (such as a floppy disk), and then transferred to the central accounting and processing system

through a reader (e.g., disk drive) of the permanent storage medium. In such a manner, the aggregate gaming session data is provided to the central accounting and processing system.

Once the aggregate gaming session data is provided to the central accounting and processing system, data for individual players and individual portable data devices (e.g., smart cards) are accumulated and processed. The current amount remaining on each of the portable data devices 130 can be determined, as of the date and time of the last extraction of gaming session data by the data extraction unit 140. Also, reconciliation for each of the gaming devices 110 can be accomplished. If desired, various data concerning individual player gaming habits can be collected and processed, for use by the casino or gaming establishment to track individual play and to allow the casino or gaming establishment to improve its targeted marketing efforts to the type of players it seeks to attract.

Fig. 2 is a block diagram of one embodiment of an intelligent data device reader 200 as may be used in the secure cashless gaming system shown in Fig. 1 (for example, as intelligent data device reader 112). The intelligent data device reader 200 is particularly geared for use in reading smart cards, but can be adapted with different interfaces to other types of portable data devices as well. As illustrated in Fig. 2, the intelligent data device reader 200 comprises a smart card reader 201 and an expansion module 250 which allows various interface functionality. The smart card reader 201 comprises a smart card interface 211, which is capable of reading information from and transmitting information to smart cards inserted therein over a standard smart card communication link. The smart card interface 211 is connected to a microprocessor 212, which in turn is connected to a memory 214 (divided into data memory 215 and program memory 216), a serial interface (such as an RS-232 interface) 213, and a security and authentication module (SAM) 210 and associated interface. The memory 214 preferably comprises a combination of random-access memory (RAM) and electrically erasable programmable read-only memory (EEPROM), and programming code (or part of the total programming code) may be downloaded to the memory 214 in order to program the intelligent data device card reader 200. The expansion module 250

is connected to the smart card reader 201, and comprises a liquid crystal display (LCD) interface 251, a keypad interface 252, additional (external) program and data memory 253, a real time clock 254, and a universal external device switch 255.

In operation, data received from a smart card via the smart card interface 211
5 may be stored in local memory 214, or else may be communicated across the serial interface 213 to the security module 113 and/or the gaming device processor 114 (see Fig. 1). Similarly, data received over the serial interface 213 may be stored by microprocessor 212 in the local memory 214, or else may be communicated via the smart card interface 211 to an inserted smart card. Gaming session data 215 may be
10 stored in the data memory 215, and/or in the external program and data memory 253, and may be read out to a data extraction device 140 (see Fig. 1) via the smart card interface 211 when the microprocessor 212 receives the appropriate commands.

The intelligent data device reader 200 may keep track of date and time information relating to gaming session data, and may use the real time clock 254 in
15 expansion module 250 for obtaining accurate date and time information. The microprocessor 212 of the smart card reader 201 may be programmed to display pertinent information on the LCD interface 251, such as gaming credits currently remaining on the inserted smart card, the player's name, or any other desired information. The intelligent data device reader 200 may read a language field from the
20 portable data device 130 in order to learn the preferred language of the player, and select the language of the information displayed on the LCD interface 251 accordingly. The keypad interface 252 of the expansion module 250 provides the ability for the player to manually select an amount to wager, to enter a personal identification number (PIN) to utilize the portable data device 130 (in a manner similar to a bank or credit card), or to
25 otherwise communicate with the gaming device 110. It can also be used by gaming establishment personnel for maintenance, such as entering test data. The universal external device switch 255 of the expansion module 250 may comprise an electrical switch which can be used to allow the microprocessor 212 of the smart card reader 201 to activate an audible buzzer, beeper, LED, light, or the like.

A block diagram of a preferred security and authentication module (SAM) 1400 usable in various embodiments of the intelligent data device reader 200 is shown in Fig. 14. The security and authentication module 1400 may physically comprise a smart card core (i.e., smart card electronics) 1450, and is preferably constructed to be a completely integral component encased in a secure housing (like an integrated chip), so that its internal connections are not externally accessible. As illustrated in Fig. 14, the security and authentication module 1400 comprises external contacts 1415 which are connected to a processor 1410 via an interface manager 1412 (preferably configured so as to be compatible with ISO 7816 interface standards). The processor 1410 is connected to a memory 1420, which is divided into data memory 1423 and program memory 1424. The processor is also preferably connected to a electrically erasable programmable read-only memory (EEPROM) 1421, or other form of non-volatile, erasable memory, for storing programming code or data that may need to be kept even if power is removed from the gaming device.

The EEPROM 1421 within the SAM 1020 may be used to store various cashless meters (in the form of program variables). Once stored, the cashless meters cannot be changed or cleared without proper access to the security and authentication module 1400 (generally requiring a master card giving the holder such privileges), even if power is removed from the gaming device. The cashless meters may be maintained by the SAM 1400 in addition to the cash meters which are typically maintained by the game device itself, and the provision of separate cashless and cash meter allows easier and more convenient accounting for the gaming device after the meters are read out. Preferably, both the cashless meters and cash meters may be read out using the portable data extraction device 140, which is described elsewhere in more detail herein.

As explained in connection with the secure cashless gaming system 100 of Fig. 1, the intelligent data device reader 200 may interface with a security module (such as security module 113 shown in Fig. 1), a preferred embodiment of which is illustrated in Fig. 3. As shown in Fig. 3, a security module 300 comprises a first interface 313 (such as an RS-232 serial communication port), which is connected to the intelligent data device reader 200 (or 112), a microprocessor 310, a memory 314 (which is divided into

data memory 320 and program memory 321), and a second communication interface 312 (such as an RS-232 serial communication port), which is connected to the game device processor. Two communication port managers 311, 315 (each of which may take the form of a universal asynchronous transceiver/receiver (UART)) are resident with the
5 microprocessor 310, for handling communications over the communication interfaces 312 and 313, respectively. Alternatively, the communication port managers (e.g., UARTs) 311, 315 may be located off-chip from the microprocessor 310.

In a preferred embodiment, the microprocessor 310 of the security module 300 is programmed to, among other things, perform one side of the cross-authentication check
10 when a gaming session starts, and periodically thereafter. Programming instructions for its part of the cross-authentication check are stored in program memory 321. Likewise, programming instructions for the counterpart of the cross-authentication check conducted by the intelligent data device reader 200 are stored in the program memory 216 of the smart card reader 201.

Fig. 16 is a flow chart diagram illustrating the operation of a gaming system in accordance with a preferred embodiment as described herein. The flow chart diagram of Fig. 16 will be described in relation to the gaming system 110 illustrated in Fig. 1 and the preferred intelligent data device reader 200 illustrated in Fig. 2, but many of its principles may be applied to other embodiments, including on-line embodiments, as
20 well. Further, for purposes of illustration, the portable data device 130 will be assumed to be a card (e.g., smart card), although other types of portable data devices could also be used.

As illustrated in Fig. 16, in a first step 1601 of the operation of the gaming system, a card is inserted into the intelligent data device reader 112. In a preferred
25 embodiment of the gaming system, the card may be one of several types. The card may be, for example, a user card, a master card, or an operator card. In a next step 1602, the intelligent data device reader 112 identifies the type of card. This identification process may be accomplished by reading the response from the data device interface (e.g., smart card reader 211 shown in Fig. 2); for example, the "answer to reset" or
30 "ATR" returned by a smart card reader. Besides being a user, master or operator card,

the input could also be a probe 141 from a data extraction unit 140, in which case gaming session data may be read out, with or without authentication as described elsewhere herein.

5 If the input is identified as a master card, then the process moves to step 1610, wherein the card is cross-authenticated with the intelligent data device reader 112 and, more specifically, with the security and authentication module (SAM) 210 (shown in Fig. 2). For the cross-authentication referred to in step 1610, the microprocessor 212 of the smart card reader 201 acts as an intermediary between the processor located on the master card and the processor (such as processor 1410 shown in Fig. 14) located on the SAM 210. A first common key is used for this cross-authentication check, which may be carried out, for example, in accordance with the same general techniques described hereinafter with respect to Fig. 4. If the cross-authentication check fails, then, moving to step 1612, the process is aborted and the card is expelled. The cross-authentication check may be done multiple times (twice, in the example shown) to increase security.

15 If the cross-authentication check succeeds, the process then moves to step 1613, wherein the master card checks whether the gaming device 110 has been initialized and, specifically, whether the intelligent data device reader 112 has been initially configured. If not, then an initial configuration is run in step 1616, whereby the intelligent data device reader 112 is "matched" to the security module 113 by downloading the unique security module identifier to the SAM 200, which may be done using the portable data extractor 140 in its programming capacity. Once the SAM 200 has been loaded with the unique security module identifier, the SAM 200 and security module 113 jointly build a second common key for subsequent use in later authentication checks, and the intelligent data device reader 112 thereby becomes uniquely associated with the particular security module 113 for the gaming device 110. If the intelligent data device reader 112 has not been initially configured, then there is no way for a player with a user card to attempt to cross-authenticate with the security module 113, and no way for the player to utilize the gaming device 110.

Once the intelligent data device reader 112 has been initially configured and associated with the security module 113, the SAM 200 may be enabled using the master

30

card. The SAM 200 preferably is programmed so that it needs to be re-enabled by the master card whenever the gaming device 110 is reset or power is removed from the gaming device 110.

If the inserted card is an operator card, then the process moves to step 1630, wherein the card and SAM 200 carry out a cross-authentication as described above for the master card. Alternatively, one-way authentication of the operator card (but not the SAM 200) may be performed. If the cross-authentication or one-way authentication check not successful, the process aborts and the card is expelled. Otherwise, the intelligent data device reader 112 may perform a second cross-authentication, this time with the security module 113 itself (although this step 1632 may be skipped, if desired, since the operator card generally does not attempt to communicate with the game device processor). In particular, the second cross-authentication, if done, may be carried out between the SAM 200 and the security module 113, using the second common key that is stored in the SAM 200 and in the security module 113 (and developed during initial configuration). The cross-authentication check may be carried out according to the process shown in Fig. 4 and described later herein. If not successful, the process aborts. Otherwise, the intelligent data device reader 112 displays gaming session data from the last several sessions. In one embodiment, for example, the intelligent data device reader 112 displays the total gaming session results from the last five sessions, as well as the most recent results from the last several gaming transactions associated with the most recent gaming session. The operator card can thereby be used by gaming establishment personnel on the floor to check wins, losses, jackpots and the like that have recently occurred at a machine. The gaming session data may be automatically scrolled through by the intelligent data device reader 112, or else, if a keypad or keyboard is provided, the operator may select which gaming session information to display. In addition to its other functions, the master card may also be provided with the same privileges as an operator card.

If the card inserted is a user card, then the process moves to step 1650, wherein cross-authentication between the card and the SAM 200 is carried out in a manner similar to that described for the master card. If not successful, the process aborts.

Otherwise, the intelligent data device reader 112 queries the game device processor 114 to see whether any credits (i.e., coins or other cash input) remains on the game device 110. If so, then a message to that effect is displayed in step 1653, and the process aborts with the user card being expelled. Otherwise, the intelligent data device reader 112

5 instructs the game device processor 114 to enter a cashless mode, and refuse to accept cash until the end of the gaming session. Transferring between cash and cashless mode in gaming devices is conventionally done in on-line gaming devices, and is well known in the art. Once cashless mode is entered, in step 1655 a second cross-authentication is carried out, this time between the intelligent data device reader 112 and the security

10 module 113. More particularly, the cross-authentication is carried out between the SAM 200 and the security module 113 using the second common key stored in the SAM 200 and the security module 113. The cross-authentication check may be carried out according to the process shown in Fig. 4 and described later herein. If the cross-authentication check fails, then the process aborts. Otherwise, in step 1657, a gaming

15 session is allowed to begin.

Figs. 18 - 21 are additional flow chart diagrams illustrating the operation of a gaming system in accordance with a preferred embodiment as described herein, providing some additional details and some variation over the flow chart diagram of Fig. 16. Fig. 18 illustrates a top-level flow chart, wherein, similar to the flow chart diagram

20 of Fig. 16, a master card is required to be inserted and authenticated, and association of the security module 113 accomplished. After association of the security module 113 and intelligent data device reader 112 is accomplished, the intelligent data device reader 112 awaits insertion of a portable data extraction unit 140, a user card, or an operator or master card.

25 Fig. 19 illustrates a preferred process flow in the case that the probe 141 of the data extraction unit 140 is inserted into the intelligent data device reader 112. According to the process flow shown in Fig. 19, various options are provided to the operator, including the setting of parameters and uploading of various data, as described later herein. Fig. 20 illustrates a preferred process flow in the case that a master card is re-

30 inserted or an operator card is inserted into the intelligent data device reader 112. As

shown in Fig. 20, various authentication checks are performed prior to allowing application of the operator card or master card functionality. Fig. 21 illustrates a preferred process flow in the case that a user card is inserted into the intelligent data device reader 112. Again, various authentication checks are performed prior to allowing user card functionality to be applied.

Fig. 4 is a process flow chart of a preferred cross-authentication procedure as may be carried out between the intelligent data device reader (e.g., intelligent data device reader 200 shown in Fig. 2) and the security module (e.g., security module 300 shown in Fig. 3), or between the intelligent data device reader and portable data device (e.g., portable data device 1500 shown in Fig. 15). As illustrated in Fig. 4, in a first step 401, a random number R1 is generated by the intelligent data device reader 200. In a next step 402, the random number R1 is enciphered by the intelligent data device reader 200 using a common key (which may be stored in SAM interface 210), yielding enciphered random number R1'. Concurrently, in step 420, a random number R2 is generated by the security module 300, and in a following step 421, the random number R2 is enciphered by the security module 300 using the same common key, yielding enciphered random number R2'. The enciphered random numbers R1', R2' are then exchanged by the intelligent data device reader 200 and the security module 300. In step 403, the intelligent data device reader 200 deciphers enciphered random number R2' using the common key, thus obtaining the original random number R2, and generates a session key S from R1 and R2 in step 404. Likewise, in step 422, the security module 300 deciphers enciphered random number R1' using the common key, thus obtaining the original random number R1, and generates the same session key S from R1 and R2 in step 423, using the same algorithm to do so as the intelligent data device reader 200. In step 405, after the session key S has been generated, random number R2 is enciphered by the intelligent data device reader 200 using the session key S, yielding an enciphered resultant A2'. Similarly, in step 424, random number R1 is enciphered by the security module 300 using the session key S, yielding an enciphered resultant A1'. The enciphered resultants A1' and A2' are exchanged by the intelligent data device reader 200 and the security module 300. In step 406, the intelligent data device reader

200 deciphers enciphered resultant A1' received from the security module 300, while in step 425 the security module 300 deciphers enciphered resultant A2' received from the intelligent data device reader 200. In step 407, the intelligent data device reader 200 compares the deciphered resultant R1 against its originally generated random number R1. If a match is found, then, in step 408, the gaming session is enabled, while if no match is found an error condition is returned in step 409. Similarly, in step 426, the security module 300 compares the deciphered resultant R2 against its originally generated random number R2. If a match is found, then, in step 427, the gaming session is enabled, while if no match is found an error condition is returned in step 428. The results of each part of the cross-authentication check may be shared between the intelligent data device reader 200 and the security module 300.

If either part of the cross-authentication check fails, then the security module 300 will not open up the communication pathway to the gaming device processor 114 (see Fig. 1), and the player will essentially be locked out from utilizing the gaming device 110. Similarly, if either part of the cross-authentication check fails, then the intelligent data device reader 200 is programmed to prevent communication with the gaming device processor 114 and to shut down its further communication with the portable data device 130. Thus, even if the security module 300 were physically bypassed (for example, by wires) after a gaming session had started, the periodic cross-check would determine that the security module 300 was no longer present, and the intelligent data device reader 200 would not allow the gaming session to continue.

Fig. 5 is a conceptual diagram illustrating the different interfaces among some of the primary components in a preferred secure cashless gaming system. As shown in Fig. 5, a smart card 501 is configured to communicate according to a standard (e.g., ISO) card interface protocol 502. An intelligent data device reader 505 is configured to communicate with the smart card 501 using the same standard (e.g., ISO) card interface protocol 507. The intelligent data device reader 505 is also configured to communicate with a security module 510 using a standard gaming device interface protocol 508, such as SAS or SDS, for example, both of which are conventional and well known in the field of gaming devices. The security module 510 is configured so as to allow pass-through

communication (i.e., transparency), once the cross-authentication and validation checks have cleared. The intelligent data reader 505 thereby communicates with the gaming device processor 515, which is also configured to communicate using a standard gaming device interface protocol 518 (the same gaming device interface protocol 508 as used by the intelligent data device reader 505), such as SAS or SDS.

The interfaces illustrated in Fig. 5 may be utilized in the cashless gaming device system 100 shown in Fig. 1, or in connection with the specific intelligent data device reader 200 or security module 300 illustrated in Figs. 2 and 3, respectively.

Fig. 17 is a conceptual diagram illustrating the different interfaces of some of the primary components of the secure cashless gaming system shown in Fig. 1, in accordance with an alternative embodiment as described herein. As illustrated in Fig. 17, similar to the embodiment shown in Fig. 5, a smart card 1701 is configured to communicate according to a standard (e.g., ISO) card interface protocol 1702. An intelligent data device reader 1705 is configured to communicate with the smart card 1701 using the same standard (e.g., ISO) card interface protocol 1702. The intelligent data device reader 1705 is also configured to communicate with a security module 1710 using a special protocol, designated as a security module (SM)/Reader interface protocol 1711 in Fig. 17. A security module 1710 also is configured to communicate with the intelligent data reader 1705 using the SM/Reader protocol 1712. The security module 1710 translates between the SM/Reader protocol 1712 and a standard gaming device interface protocol 1708, such as SAS or SDS. The security module 1710 is configured so as to communicate with the gaming device processor 1715, which is also configured to use the standard gaming device interface protocol 1718 (i.e., the same gaming device interface protocol 1708 as used by the security module 1710), such as SAS or SDS.

The SM/Reader interface protocol 1711, 1712 preferably supports at least of subset of commands and capabilities as provided by the standard gaming device interface protocol 1708 and 1718, but need not provide all of the capabilities thereof, particularly if the gaming device is used off-line. The SM/Reader interface protocol 1711, 1712 may, for example, support commands or capabilities for crediting the gaming device, debiting the gaming device, checking the denomination of the gaming device, checking

the gaming device identification number, checking the currency of the gaming device, checking the amount of credit left on the gaming device, and receiving gaming device activity (such as, for example, how much the player is betting, result of gaming transaction (winner, loser, jackpot, etc.), or error conditions at the gaming device).

5 An advantage of the protocol structure illustrated in the embodiment of Fig. 17 is that the same intelligent data device reader 1705 could be used without modification along with gaming devices using any standard gaming device interface protocol that is supported by the security module 1710. For the protocol structure illustrated in Fig. 5, by contrast, it may be necessary to download the specific standard gaming device
10 interface protocol 508 to the intelligent data device reader 505 prior to operation, unless the memory space of the intelligent data device reader 505 is sufficient to contain the various standard gaming device interface protocols from which the desired one may be selected. By moving the responsibility for interfacing with the standard gaming device interface protocol to the security module 1710, as illustrated in Fig. 17, the memory
15 requirements for the intelligent data device reader 1705 may be alleviated somewhat.

As with the embodiment shown in Fig. 5, the interfaces illustrated in Fig. 17 may be utilized in the cashless gaming device system 100 shown in Fig. 1, or in connection with the specific intelligent data device reader 200 or security module 300 illustrated in Figs. 2 and 3, respectively.

20 When the cross-authentication and validation checks first pass, and a gaming session is enabled, the intelligent data device reader 112 may be programmed with additional capability to start off a gaming session without extra effort by the player. Specifically, the intelligent data device reader 112 may be programmed to remove gaming credits from the credit amount stored in the portable data device 130, and to
25 transfer those credits to the gaming device processor 114 to allow play to begin. The number of credits to be so transferred may be programmably set. The intelligent data device reader 112 uses an link layer protocol (such as a smart card protocol) for reading and adjusting the credits on the portable data device 130, then uses the gaming device protocol (such as SAS or SDS) to transfer the credits over to the gaming device
30 processor 114. The monetary value and/or number of credits transferred (and hence

available) may be displayed to the player on an LCD display, along with other information, as desired, such as the players name or pseudonym. The portable data device 130 may have a player language data field, which may be read by the intelligent data device reader 112, which can adjust the language of any special messages
5 accordingly.

The intelligent data device reader 112 may further be programmed such that each time the number of available credits drops below a predefined level, the intelligent data device reader 112 transfers additional gaming credits from the current credit amount on the portable data device 130 to the gaming device processor 114. The intelligent data
10 device reader 112 is aware of the number of current credits, as well as the outcome of the most recent gaming transaction, because the gaming device processor 114 is typically programmed to make such information available according to standard gaming device protocols (such as SAS or SDS). The level at which the intelligent data device reader 112 re-credits the gaming device 110, and the amount of credits transferred in a re-credit
15 transaction, may both be programmably set. By automatically re-crediting the machine each time the number of credits drops below the predefined minimum, the player does not need access to a keypad or other similar means for transferring credits, and is not burdened with the inconvenience of constantly refreshing the amount of credits at the machine.

20 At the end of a gaming session, or periodically during the gaming session as gaming credits are transferred to the gaming device 110, the intelligent data reader 112 transmits back to the smart card (or other portable data device 130) update information which alters the amount of gaming credit remaining on the portable data device 130. When the player leaves the gaming device, the new gaming credit amount will reside on
25 the portable data device 130. Preferably, the portable data device 130 stores a predefined number of previous gaming transactions (i.e., wagers), such as 10 or 20 previous gaming transactions. Generally, memory space on devices such as smart cards is very limited, which prevents storage of large amounts of information. Storage of a limited number of gaming transactions may prove beneficial in certain circumstances.
30 For example, should the player contest a pay-out on a recent wager, the portable data

device 130 could be read (at the cashier station 120) to determine what transpired at the gaming device 110.

Fig. 6 is a diagram of a preferred data extraction device 600 such as may be used in the secure cashless gaming system shown in Fig. 1 (for example, as data extraction device 140 shown in Fig. 1). As illustrated in Fig. 6, the data extraction device 600 includes a probe 630 connected to a portable high-volume data retention unit 610 via a cable 640. The probe 630 consists of an interface 631 which is compatible with the interface utilized by the intelligent data device reader 112 (see Fig. 1). Signals received by the interface 631 from the intelligent data device reader 112 are amplified by a voltage converter interface 632, so as to make them of the appropriate voltage level for a serial (e.g., RS-232) interface 635. Typically, signals output by the interface 631 are 5-volt signals, while an RS-232 interface operates with 12-volt signals. The amplified signals are transmitted by the serial interface 635 over the cable 640 to another serial (e.g., RS-232) interface 614, which is part of the portable high-volume data retention unit 610. The portable high-volume data retention unit 610 also comprises a processor 611 and a memory 612 for receiving and storing information received by the probe 630 from the intelligent data device reader 112. Memory 612 is preferably of sufficient capacity so as to allow storage of gaming session information from a large number of gaming devices 110. Alternatively, gaming session information may periodically be written to floppy disks or other intermediate storage devices, when the memory 612 gets full.

In operation, the operator inserts the probe 630 into the intelligent data device reader 112, generally in the same manner as a player would insert a portable data device 130. For example, if the portable data device 130 is a smart card, and the intelligent data device reader 112 includes a smart card interface, then the operator would insert the probe 630 in the slot of the smart card interface intended to receive smart cards. The operator then triggers the extraction of data from the gaming device 110, by manually pressing a button, or entering a code on a keypad, or otherwise generating a manual input. Alternatively, the presence of the probe 630 may be automatically detected by the intelligent data device reader 112, which then proceeds to transmit accumulated gaming

session information to the data extraction device 600 via the communication link established by the probe 630. The intelligent data device reader 112 may store, for example, hundreds or thousands of the last gaming sessions played at the machine. In a presently preferred embodiment, the intelligent data device reader 112 stores the last
5 3000 gaming sessions played at the machine.

Figs. 7 and 8A - 8E are diagrams illustrating various formats in which data is transferred from the intelligent data device reader 112 to the data extraction device 600, and stored therein. In a preferred embodiment, the gaming session information is made secure and tamper-resistant by providing a special integrity code (referred to as a
10 "MAC") for each gaming session record, and then again by providing a separate MAC for all of the gaming sessions transmitted with the file as a group, so as to prevent the erasure of an entire gaming session. Fig. 7 is a diagram of a portion of a transaction list file format illustrating the use of MACs to preserve data integrity. As shown in Fig. 7, a transaction list file 700 comprises a header record 701, one or more gaming session
15 records 702a-702n, each of which has its own individual MAC 703a-703n, respectively, and a group MAC 705.

Figs. 8A - 8E are diagrams illustrating the format of records which may be included in the transaction list file transmitted from a data device reader to a data extraction device. Figs. 8A and 8B show a header records 800 and 820 for transactions
20 and meter readings, respectively. Fig. 8C shows a gaming session record 840. Fig. 8D shows a header record 860 for recorded incidents during previous gaming sessions, and Fig. 8E shows an incident file record 880.

Header record 800 shown in Fig. 8A may include, for example, a record number identifier field 801, a machine identifier field 802, a data device reader identifier field
25 803, a denomination field 804, a total money in field 805, a total money out field 806, a total money played 807 field, a total money won field 808, a start date field 809, a start time field 810, a last time field 812, a number of sessions field 813, and a total field 814.

Header record 820 shown in Fig. 8B may include, for example, a record
30 identifier field 821, a cumulative money in field 822, cumulative money out field 823,

cumulative money played field 824, a cumulative money won field 825, and a total field 826.

Gaming session record 840 shown in Fig. 8C may include, for example, a record identifier field 841, a session number field 842, a portable data device (e.g., smart card) identifier field 843, a transaction type field 844, a session money in field 845, a session money out field 846, a session money played field 847, a session money won field 848, a player identifier field 849, an offset data field 850, a start time field 851, a duration field 852, and total field 853.

Header record 860 shown in Fig. 8D may include, for example, a record identifier field 861, a machine identifier field 862, a data device reader identifier field 863, a number of incidents field 864, and a total field 865. Incident file record 880 shown in Fig. 8E may include, for example, a record identifier field 881, a incident type code field 882, a date of incident field 883, a time of incident field 884, a program status field 885, and a data message field 886.

The data extraction device 600 may, in a preferred embodiment, provide the operator with a choice of various commands. Examples of commands include: (1) read transaction list (i.e., gaming session information); (2) read incident list; (3) read parameters; (4) load new parameters; (5) erase transaction list (from memory of the intelligent data device reader 112); and (6) erase transaction list (from memory of the intelligent data device reader 112). The parameters which may be read with command (3) may include, for example, display messages, machine denomination (\$1, \$5, etc.), initial credit transfer amount, level at which to re-credit, and how much to re-credit. By using command (4), the parameters (including the machine denomination and display messages) may be re-programmed using the data extraction device 600.

Once the aggregate gaming session data has been downloaded from all of the gaming devices to the data extraction unit 600, the gaming session data is transferred to a central accounting and processing system. The gaming session data may be transferred via a physical cable connection through a data port 615 of the data extraction device 600 (using a physical cable 655 with a port connector 650 and a cable wire 651), or else may

be written to one or more floppy disks or other storage media and read by computer equipment associated with the central accounting and processing system.

Further details concerning the entry of data into the central accounting and processing system are provided with reference to Fig. 9, which is a block diagram illustrating processing of transaction data extracted from a data device reader. As illustrated in Fig. 9, gaming device data (including transaction list data and incident data) is received from the data extraction device 140 (or 600) over an interface 901 (such as a parallel port connection, for example, or via a disk or other storage medium). The transaction data is validated by validation function routine 915 by checking the MAC for each gaming session and checking the group MAC for all of the gaming sessions (see, e.g., Fig. 7). The running totals for each portable data device 130 are then updated by an update function routine 917. The transaction data is stored in a transaction database 925, and the incident data is stored in an incident database 926. A database interface 910 may format the data and otherwise facilitate storage in the transaction database 925 or incident database 926. Via a user interface 941 (such as at a cashier station 120), an authorized employee or agent of the casino or gaming establishment may view the transaction or incident data by issuing a query to the database 925 or 926, respectively. A batch process 930 may be run on the information stored in the transaction database 925, to allow profiling or information gathering concerning particular players. Tracking of any of the types or fields of data obtained from the portable data devices 130 or the portable data extraction unit 140 may be done by the gaming establishment in a batch mode. The results of such tracking may provide a basis for the gaming establishment to issue coupons, gaming credits, or other perquisites to customers to encourage their continued business.

Fig. 10 is a diagram of one embodiment of a secure cashless gaming system 1001, illustrating from a graphical perspective, examples of interactions between players and the various components of the gaming system 1001. As illustrated in Fig. 10, players can obtain variable amount portable data devices (such as smart cards) from a cashier station, and utilize them in various gaming devices as may be provided by the gaming establishment. Information stored in the intelligent data device readers

(designated as "internal reader" of the "game" in Fig. 10) may be read out using a portable data extractor, such as a laptop or other computerized device connected to a probe.

Fig. 11 is a diagram of a cashless gaming system 1100 using on-line gaming devices 1110 having intelligent data device readers connected to a network host 1151 in a centralized network configuration. In the embodiment illustrated in Fig. 11, a network host 1151 communicates with the various on-line gaming devices 1110 over a network communication bus 1150. Each gaming device 1110, similar to those shown in Fig. 1, comprises an intelligent data device reader 1112, a game device processor 1114, and a security module 1113 interposed between the intelligent data device reader 1112 and game device processor. The data device reader 1112 accepts and reads portable data devices 1113, in a manner similar to that described for Fig. 1. The intelligent data device reader 1112 also stores gaming session data as previously explained herein.

Rather than using a portable data extractor to obtain the gaming session data stored in the intelligent data device reader 1112, the gaming session data is transferred to the network host 1151 during convenient periods of time, depending on the traffic at the network host 1151. In most, if not all, conventional on-line gaming systems, the gaming devices transmit gaming information to a network host for each gaming transaction. The network host thus can get overwhelmed when the attached gaming devices are very busy, and bottlenecks or slow response of the network host can occur. In the embodiment illustrated in Fig. 11, on the other hand, the intelligent data device reader 1112 alleviates the processing burden on the network host 1151 by temporarily storing gaming session information that may accrue over hours or even days, until the network host 1151 requests it. With such a configuration, the network host 1151 need only perform a fraction of the processing of conventional on-line gaming systems.

As further illustrated in Fig. 11, the network host 1150 may be connected to a cashier station 1120, which is generally of the same character as that described with respect to Fig. 1. Players can receive portable data devices 1130 from the cashier station 1120, or else can redeem remaining credits on portable data devices 1130 after they have been used, by taking them to the cashier station 1120.

The content and format of the gaming session (and related) data stored by the intelligent data device reader 1112 may take the format, for example, which is shown in Figs. 8A – 8E. Transferring information in such a format would generally require an adaptation to a standard network communication protocol format, such as SAS or SDS.

5 There are a variety of ways in which the intelligent data device reader 1112 may be connected to the network communication bus 1150 for communication with to the network host 1151. Two examples of such connection are shown in Figs. 12 and 13, respectively. In the first example, shown in Fig. 12, a gaming device 1210 includes the game device processor 1214 connected to both a network communication port 1238 and
10 a local communication port 1237. The game device processor 1214 selects between the local communication port 1237 and the network communication port 1238 as circumstances dictate. The local communication port 1237 is connected to a local area network including a local network bus 1261. The local network includes a security module 1213, and may optionally include a keyboard 1235, a display 1236, or any other
15 additional component desired. The security module 1213 is connected to an intelligent data device reader 1212. The security module 1213 and intelligent data device reader 1212 are in most respects analogous to the security module 113 and intelligent data device reader 112 depicted in Fig. 1. However, rather than extracting data from the intelligent data device reader 1212 using a portable data extractor (as in a preferred
20 embodiment in accordance with Fig. 1), instead the gaming session data is transmitted over the network communication bus 1250 to the network host 1251. The transfer of the gaming session data can be initiated by either the intelligent data device reader 1212, the game device processor 1214, or the network host 1251. The game device processor 1214 acts as the intermediary between the intelligent data device reader 1212 and the
25 network host 1251. The intelligent data device reader 1212 transfers gaming session data to the game device processor 1214 via the local communication port 1237, and the game device processor 1214 then forwards the gaming session data to the network host 1251 via the network communication port 1238. The gaming session data need not necessarily be formatted with MACs, depending upon the level of security of the lines
30 connecting the network host 1251 to the gaming device 1210.

Fig. 13 is a diagram illustrating another manner of connecting a gaming device to a network host. As illustrated in Fig. 13, a gaming device 1310 includes a game device processor 1314, and intelligent data device reader 1312, and a security module 1313 interposed between the game device processor 1314 and the intelligent data device reader 1312. The security module 1313 internally has a "T" data path configuration, such that data may be routed over a first data path 1324 between the intelligent data device reader 1312 and the game device processor 1314, or else over a second data path 1323 between the game device processor 1314 and the network host 1351. In operation, when the gaming device 1310 is in a cash mode, the security module 1313 allows the game device processor 1314 to communicate freely with the network host 1351. However, when a portable data device is inserted in the intelligent data device reader 1312, and when the gaming device 1310 enters a cashless mode after the portable data device and intelligent data device reader 1312 are authenticated, the security module 1313 temporarily shuts down data path 1323 between the game device processor 1314 and the network host 1351, until the gaming session is complete. The embodiment shown in Fig. 13 thereby allows gaming devices having only a single communication port to have a cash or cashless capability, and still be connected to a centralized network host 1351 for on-line control.

In a number of embodiments that have been discussed above and/or illustrated in the drawings, specific types of interfaces (such as RS-232) have been enumerated. It should be understood that no limitation is intended by the specific type of interface that has been included as part of the various embodiments, and those skilled in the art will recognize that various alternative serial or parallel interfaces may be used, depending upon such things as cost, available space, preferred protocol, and other design considerations which are routinely addressed by engineers.

While preferred embodiments of the invention have been described herein, many variations are possible which remain within the concept and scope of the invention. Such variations would become clear to one of ordinary skill in the art after inspection of the specification and the drawings. The invention therefore is not to be restricted except within the spirit and scope of any appended claims.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

5

1. A gaming device for use in a cashless gaming system, comprising:
a data device reader adapted to receive and read portable data devices;
a game device processor; and
a security module interposed between said data device reader and said game
10 device, processor, said security module preventing communication between said data
device reader and said game device processor unless said data device reader is
authenticated by said security module upon one of said portable data devices being
received by said data device reader.
- 15 2. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein said portable data devices
comprise smart cards, and wherein said data device reader comprises a smart card
reader.
- 20 3. An intelligent data reader for use in a gaming device, comprising:
a data device interface adapted to receive and read portable data devices, each of
said portable data devices associated with a player;
a gaming device interface for connection to the gaming device;
a memory; and
a processor connected to said memory, said data device interface and said gaming
25 device interface, said processor configured to communicate with the gaming device over
said gaming device interface and to store session gaming data for each player in said
memory.

4. The intelligent data reader of claim 3, wherein each portable data device stores a credit amount allowing the player associated with the portable data device to utilize the gaming device.

5 5. The intelligent data reader of claim 4, wherein a portion of said credit amount is automatically conveyed by said intelligent data device reader to the gaming device upon presentation of said portable data device to said data device interface.

6. A security module for use in a gaming device, comprising:
10 a data device reader interface for connection to a data device reader;
a gaming device interface for connection to a game device processor; and
a processor interposed between said data device reader interface and said gaming device interface, said processor configured to prevent communication between said data device reader and said game device processor unless said data device reader is first
15 authenticated.

7. The security module of claim 6, wherein said processor allows communications to pass through unimpeded between said data device reader and said game device processor after authentication of said data device reader.
20

8. The security module of claim 6, wherein said processor is configured to perform periodic authentication of said data device reader after said data device reader is first authenticated, and to prevent communication between said data device reader and said game device processor if said data device reader fails said periodic authentication.
25

9. The security module of claim 6, wherein said data device reader is first authenticated when said processor generates a first random number, enciphers said first random number using a common key to generate a first enciphered random number, sends said first enciphered random number to said data device reader over said data
30 device reader interface, receives a second enciphered random number from said data

device reader over said data device reader interface, deciphers said second enciphered random number using said common key to generate a second random number, generates a session key from said first random number and said second random number, receives a third enciphered number from said data device reader over said data device reader
5 interface, deciphers said third enciphered number using said session key to generate an authentication test value, and verifies that said authentication test value matches said second random number.

10 10. A secure, cashless gaming system, comprising:
a plurality of gaming devices, each of said gaming devices comprising
a security module;
a gaming device processor; and
an intelligent data device reader adapted to receive and read
portable data devices, said intelligent data device reader storing data for
15 individual gaming sessions in a local memory;
a portable data extractor adapted to be received by said intelligent data device reader, said portable data extractor comprising memory for storing said data for individual gaming sessions from said plurality of gaming devices.

20 11. The intelligent data reader of claim 3, wherein said processor is configured to store session gaming data for each player in said memory.

25 12. The intelligent data reader of claim 3, wherein said processor switches the gaming device from the cash mode of operation to the cashless mode of operation by sending a command across the gaming device interface in response to reading a portable data device at said data device interface.

30 13. The intelligent data reader of claim 12, wherein switching of the gaming device from the cash mode of operation to the cashless mode of operation is inhibited if credit is still remaining on said gaming device.

14. The intelligent data reader of claim 12, wherein switching of the gaming device from the cash mode of operation to the cashless mode of operation is inhibited if said portable data device does not pass an authentication check.

5

15. The intelligent data reader of claim 14, further comprising an internal security access module, wherein said authentication check includes a first cross-authentication check between said portable data device and said internal security access module, and a second cross-authentication check between said internal security access
10 module of the intelligent data reader and an external security module interposed between said gaming device interface and the gaming device.

16. The intelligent data reader of claim 12, wherein said processor switches the gaming device from the cashless mode of operation back to the cash mode of operation
15 by sending a command across the gaming device interface in response to termination of a gaming session.

17. The intelligent data reader of claim 16, further comprising cashless meters for storing session gaming data, including credit information relating to said portable
20 data devices.

18. The intelligent data reader of claim 17, wherein credit information is transmitted from said cashless gaming meters over the data device interface to the portable data device upon termination of a gaming session.

25

19. The intelligent data reader of claim 16, wherein the commands sent from said processor to said gaming device to switch said gaming device to the cashless mode of operation or the cash mode of operation are transmitted using a standard gaming device communication protocol.

30

20. The intelligent data reader of claim 19, wherein said standard gaming device communication protocol is either SDS or SAS.

21. A data reader, comprising:

5 a data device interface adapted to receive and read portable data devices, each of said portable data devices storing credit information;

an external device interface for connection to an external device having a cash input mechanism;

10 a memory, said memory including cashless meters for storing credit information relating to said portable data devices; and

a processor connected to said memory, said data device interface and said external device interface, said processor configured to communicate with the external device over said external device interface and to switch said external device between a cash mode of operation and a cashless mode of operation.

15 22. The data reader of claim 21, wherein said external device comprises an electronic gaming machine, and wherein said external device interface comprises a gaming machine interface.

20 23. The data reader of claim 22, wherein each portable data device stores a credit amount allowing a player associated with the portable data device to utilize the gaming device.

25 24. The data reader of claim 23, wherein a portion of said credit amount is automatically conveyed to the gaming device over the gaming device interface upon presentation of said portable data device to said data device interface.

25 25. The data reader of claim 23, wherein said processor is configured to store session gaming data for each player in said memory.

26. The data reader of claim 22, wherein credit information is transmitted from said cashless gaming meters over the data device interface to the portable data device upon termination of a gaming session.

5 27. The data reader of claim 22, wherein the commands sent from said processor to the gaming device to switch the gaming device to the cashless mode of operation or the cash mode of operation are transmitted using a standard gaming device communication protocol.

10 28. The data reader of claim 27, wherein said standard gaming device communication protocol is either SDS or SAS.

29. The data reader of claim 21, wherein said processor switches the external device from the cash mode of operation to the cashless mode of operation by sending a
15 command across the external device interface in response to reading a portable data device at said data device interface.

30. The data reader of claim 29, wherein switching of the external device from the cash mode of operation to the cashless mode of operation is inhibited if credit is still
20 remaining on said external device.

31. The data reader of claim 12, wherein switching of the external device from the cash mode of operation to the cashless mode of operation is inhibited if said portable data device does not pass an authentication check.
25

32. The data reader of claim 31, further comprising an internal security access module, wherein said authentication check includes a first cross-authentication check between said portable data device and said internal security access module, and a second cross-authentication check between said internal security access module of the data reader
30 and an external security module interposed between said external device interface and the external device.

33. The data reader of claim 32, wherein said external security module allows communications to pass through unimpeded between said data device reader and said external device after the cross-authentication check between said internal security access
5 module with said external security module.

34. The data reader of claim 33, wherein said external security module is configured to perform periodic authentication of said data device reader after said cross-authentication check between said internal security access module with said external
10 security module, and to prevent communication between said data device reader and said external device if said periodic authentication fails.

35. The data reader of claim 32, wherein said second cross-authentication check is carried out when said internal security access module generates a first random
15 number, enciphers said first random number using a common key to generate a first enciphered random number, sends said first enciphered random number to said external security module over said external device interface, receives a second enciphered random number from said external security module over said gaming device interface, deciphers said second enciphered random number using said common key to generate a
20 second random number, generates a session key from said first random number and said second random number, receives a third enciphered number from said external security module over said data device reader interface, deciphers said third enciphered number using said session key to generate an authentication test value, and verifies that said authentication test value matches said second random number.

25

36. A method of controlling operation of a gaming device, said gaming device comprising a cash input mechanism, the method comprising the steps of:

reading portable data devices at a portable data device interface of an intelligent data reader, said portable data device storing credit information; and

transmitting commands from said intelligent data reader to the gaming device over a gaming device interface, to switch the gaming device between a cash mode of operation and a cashless mode of operation.

5 37. The method of claim 36, wherein the step of transmitting commands from said intelligent data reader to the gaming device over the gaming device interface comprises the steps of transmitting a first command to switch the gaming device to the cashless mode of operation when a portable data device is initially read at said portable data device interface, and transmitting a second command to switch the gaming device to the cash mode of operation when a gaming session initiated using the portable data device has terminated.

 38. The method of claim 36, wherein said portable data device are smart cards.

15 39. The method of claim 36, further comprising the step of cross-authenticating each portable data device with an internal security access module upon initially reading the portable data device.

 40 The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of cross-authenticating the internal security access module with an external security module interposed between said gaming device interface and the gaming device, upon initially reading the portable data device.

 41. The method of claim 36, further comprising the step of automatically transferring, without manual intervention, a fixed amount of credit from a portable data device to the gaming device whenever an amount of credit remaining at the gaming device drops below a predetermined threshold amount.

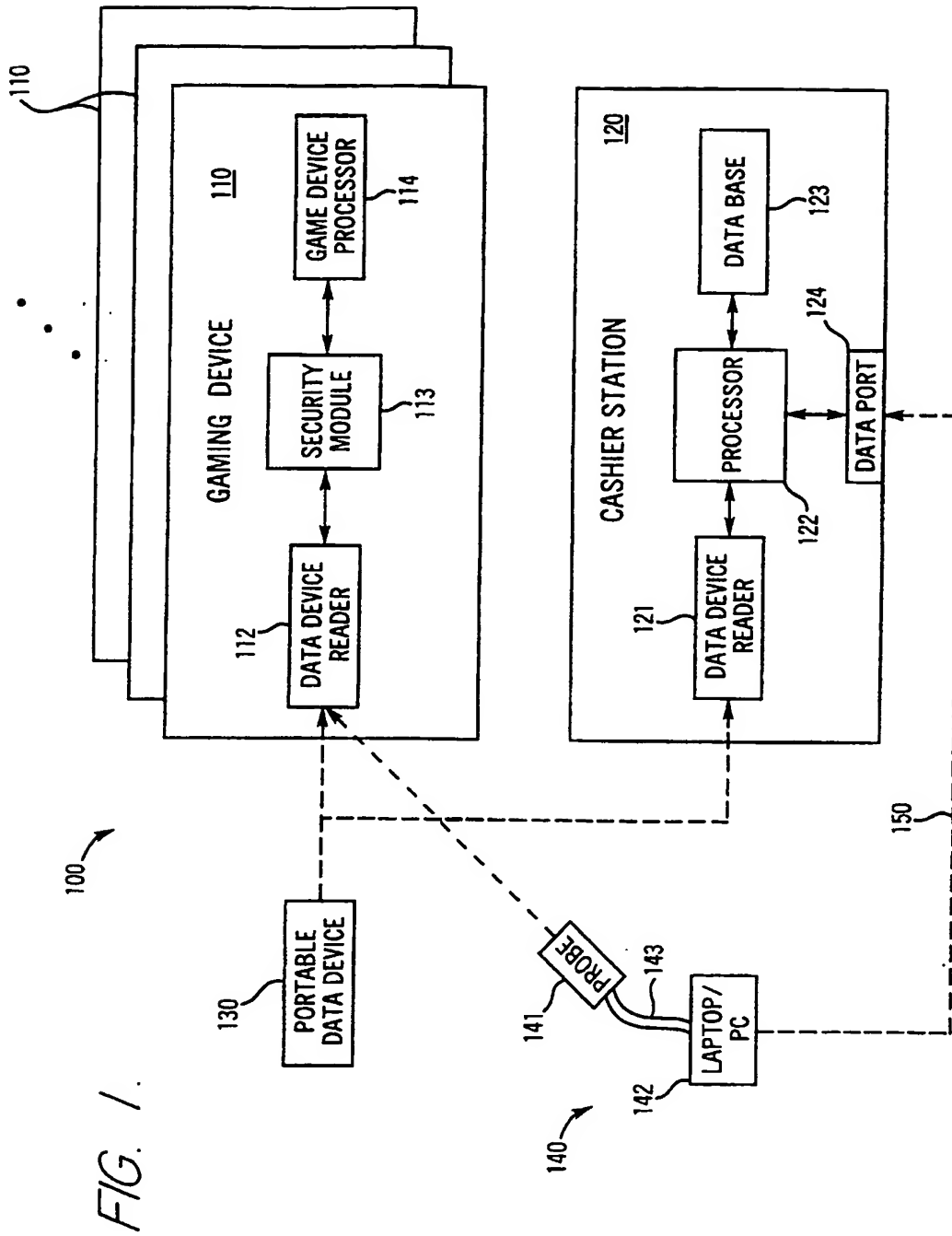


FIG. 1.

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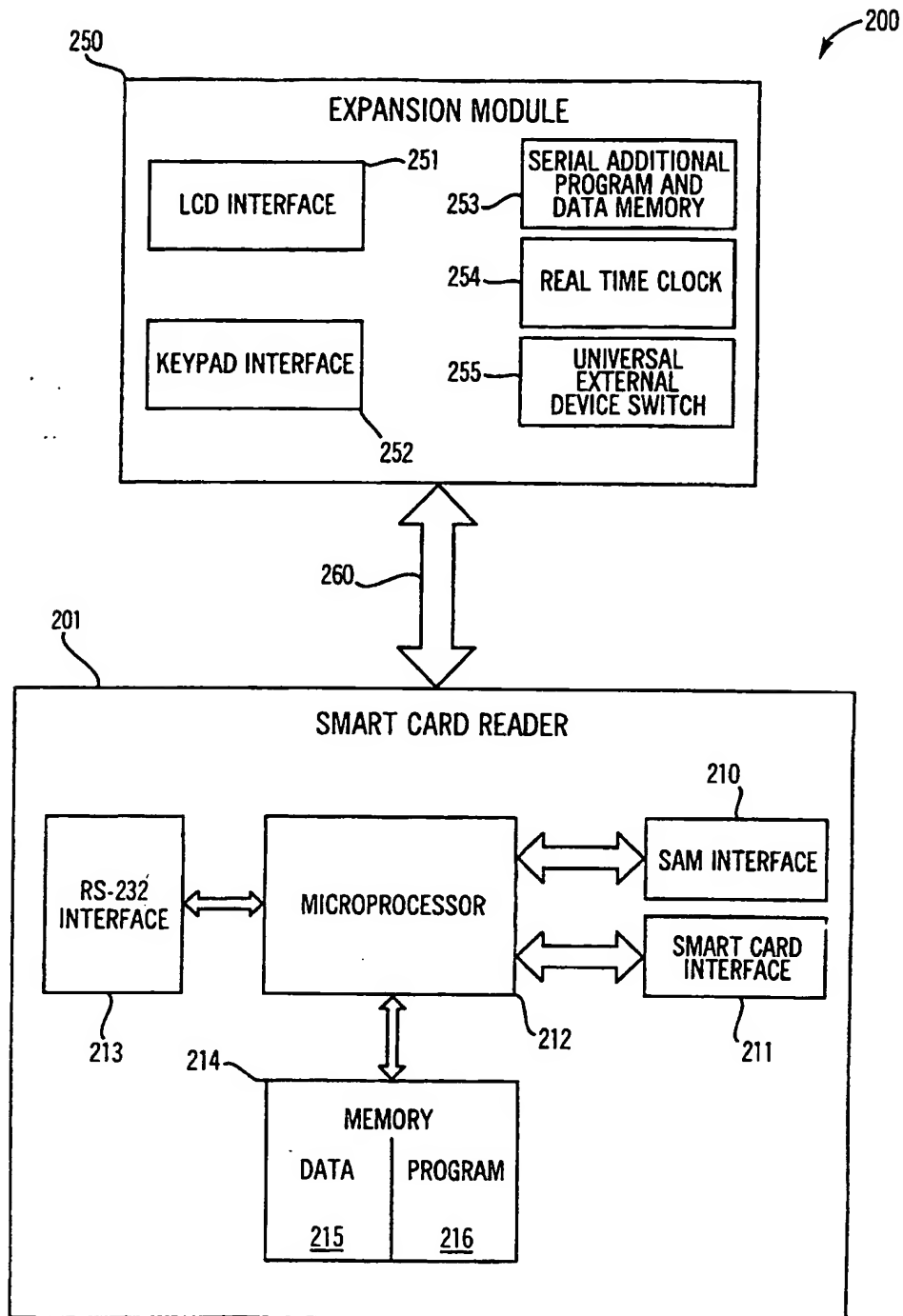


FIG. 2.

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FIG. 3.

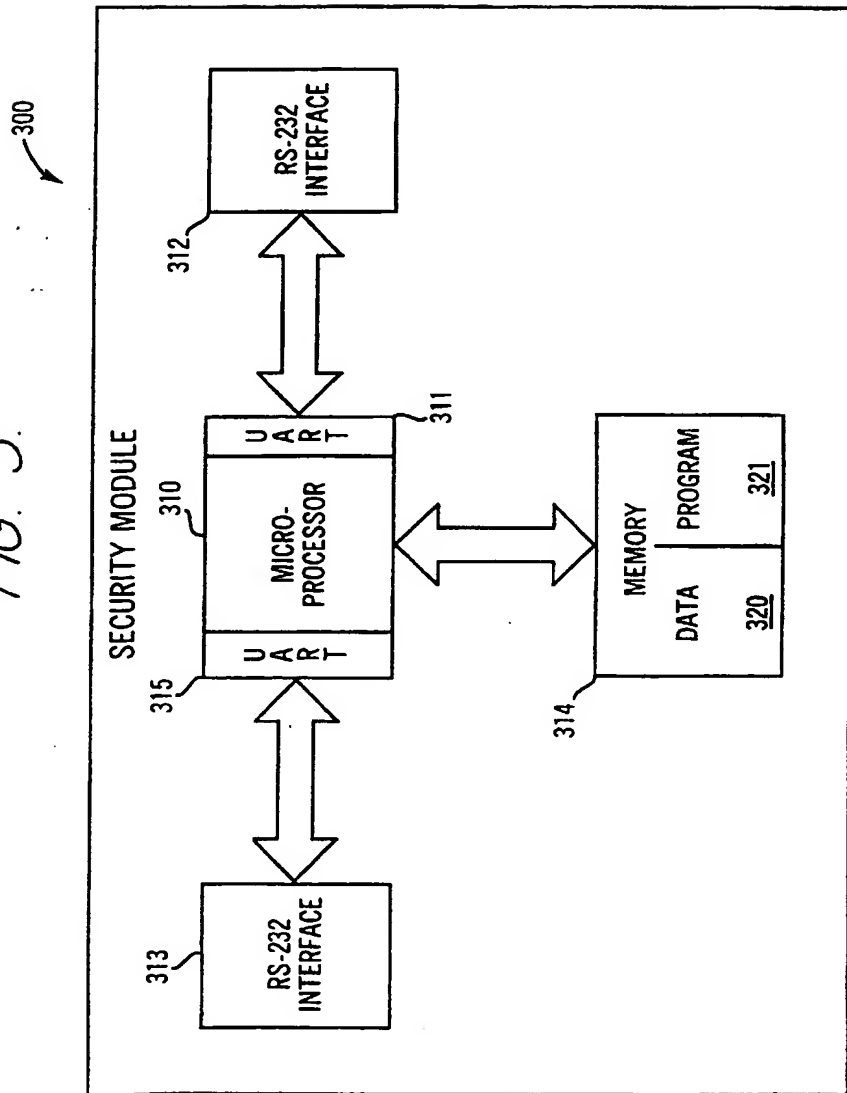
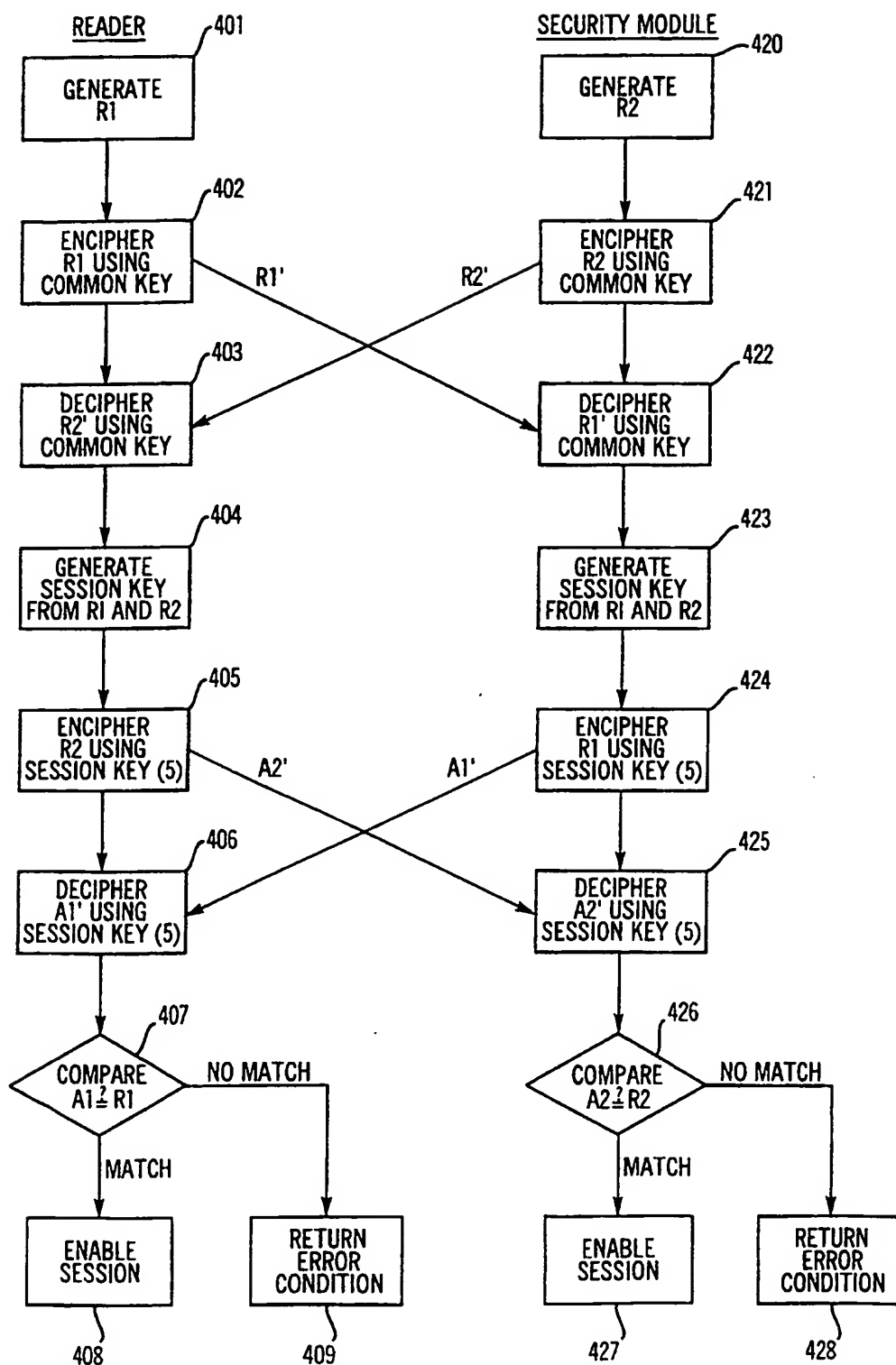


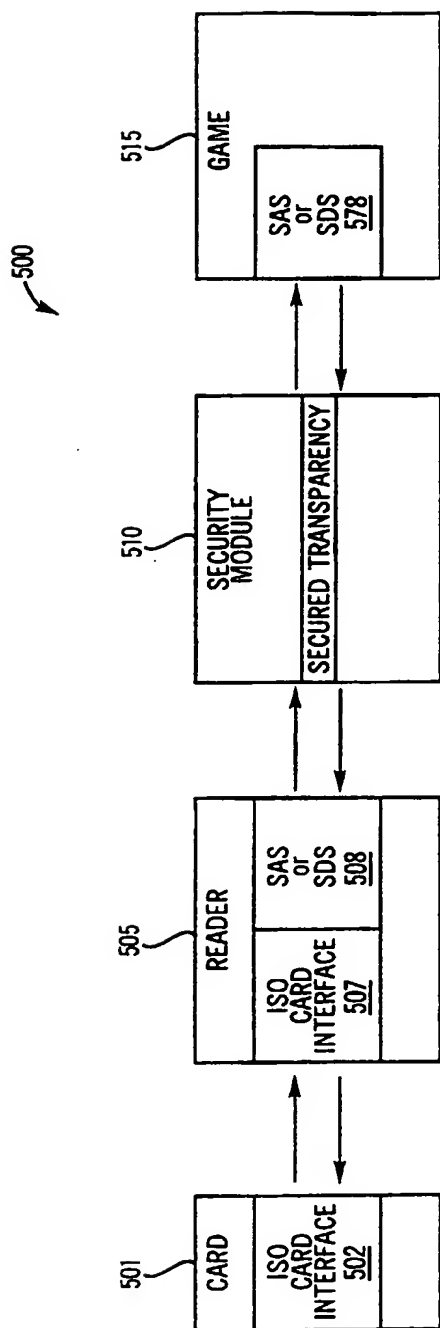
FIG. 4.

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FIG. 5.



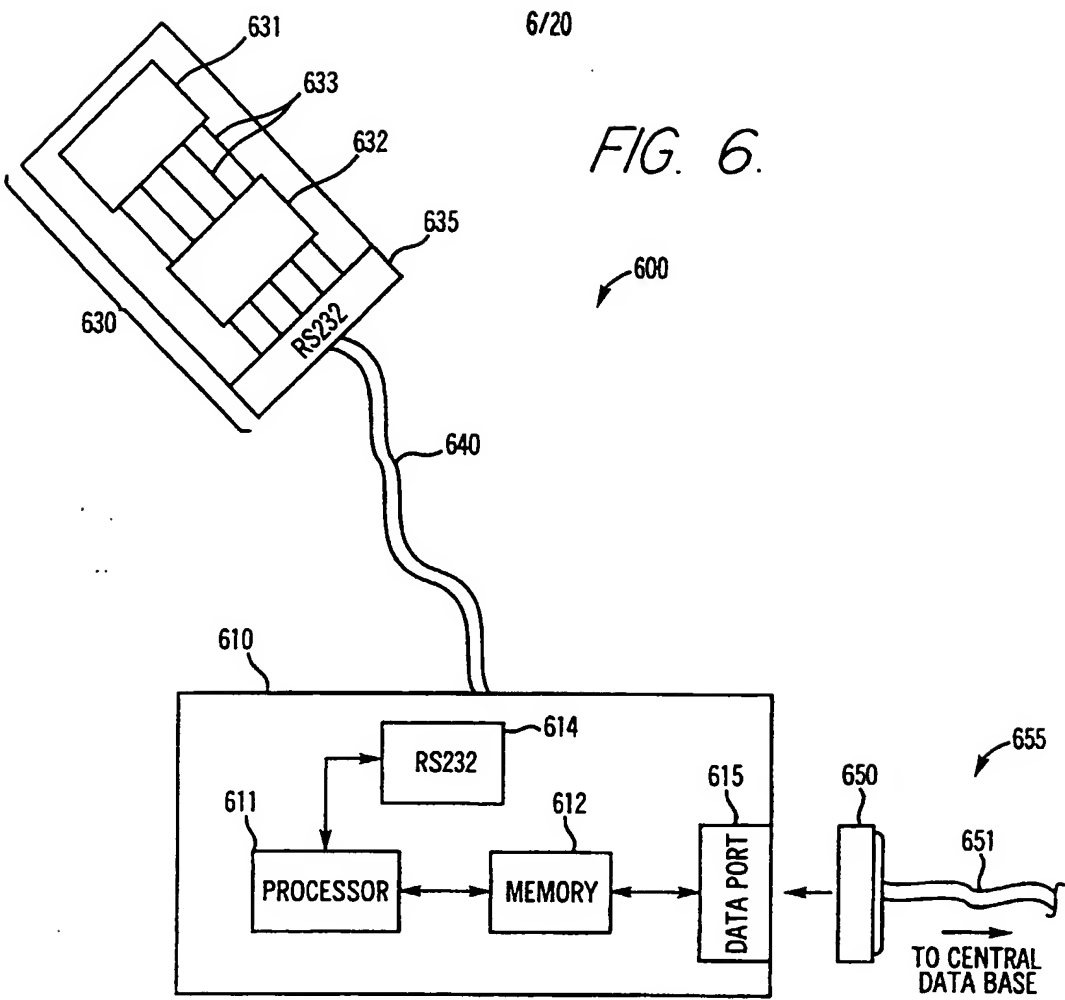


FIG. 7.

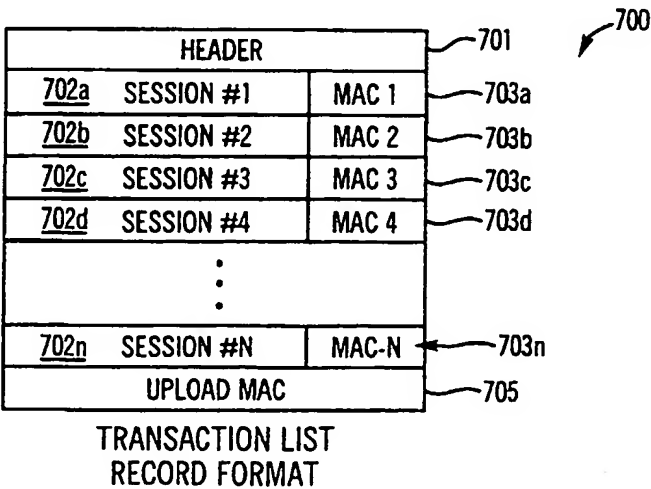


FIG. 8A.

RECORD ID	MACHINE ID	READER ID	DENOM	TOTAL IN	TOTAL OUT	TOTAL PLYD	TOTAL WON	START DATE	START TIME	LAST DATE	LAST TIME	NUM SEQ.	MAC	TOTAL
801	802	803	804	805	806	807	808	809	810	811	812	813	814	815

FIG. 8B.

RECORD ID	CUMM IN	CUMM OUT	CUMM PLYD	CUMM WON	TOTAL
821	822	823	824	825	826

FIG. 8C.

RECORD ID	SESSION #	CARD #	TRAN TYPE	SESS IN	SESS OUT	SESS PLYD	SESS WON	PLAYER ID	OFFSET DATE	START TIME	DURATION	TOTAL
841	842	843	844	845	846	847	848	849	850	851	852	853

FIG. 8D.

RECORD ID	MACHINE ID	READER ID	NUM INCIDENTS	TOTAL
861	862	863	864	865

FIG. 8E.

RECORD ID	INC CODE	DATE	TIME	PROG. STATE	DATA
881	882	883	884	885	886

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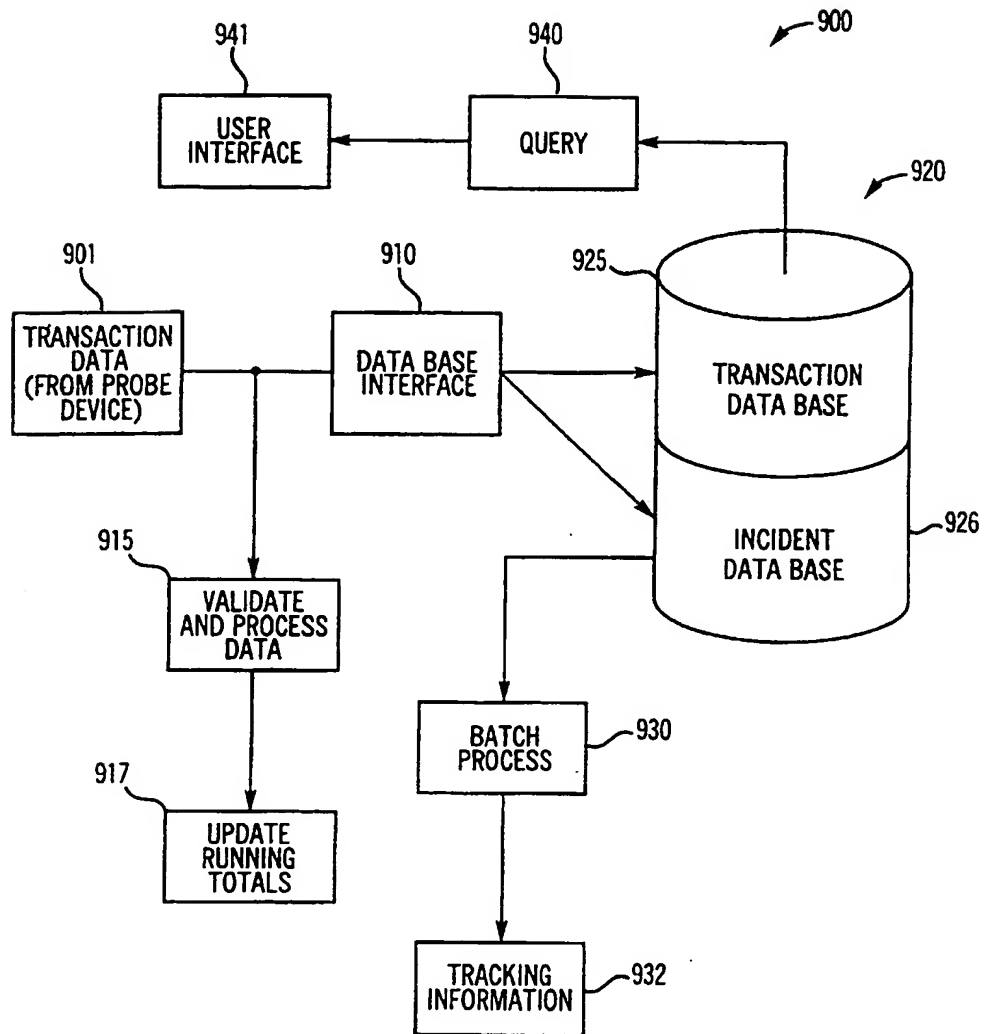
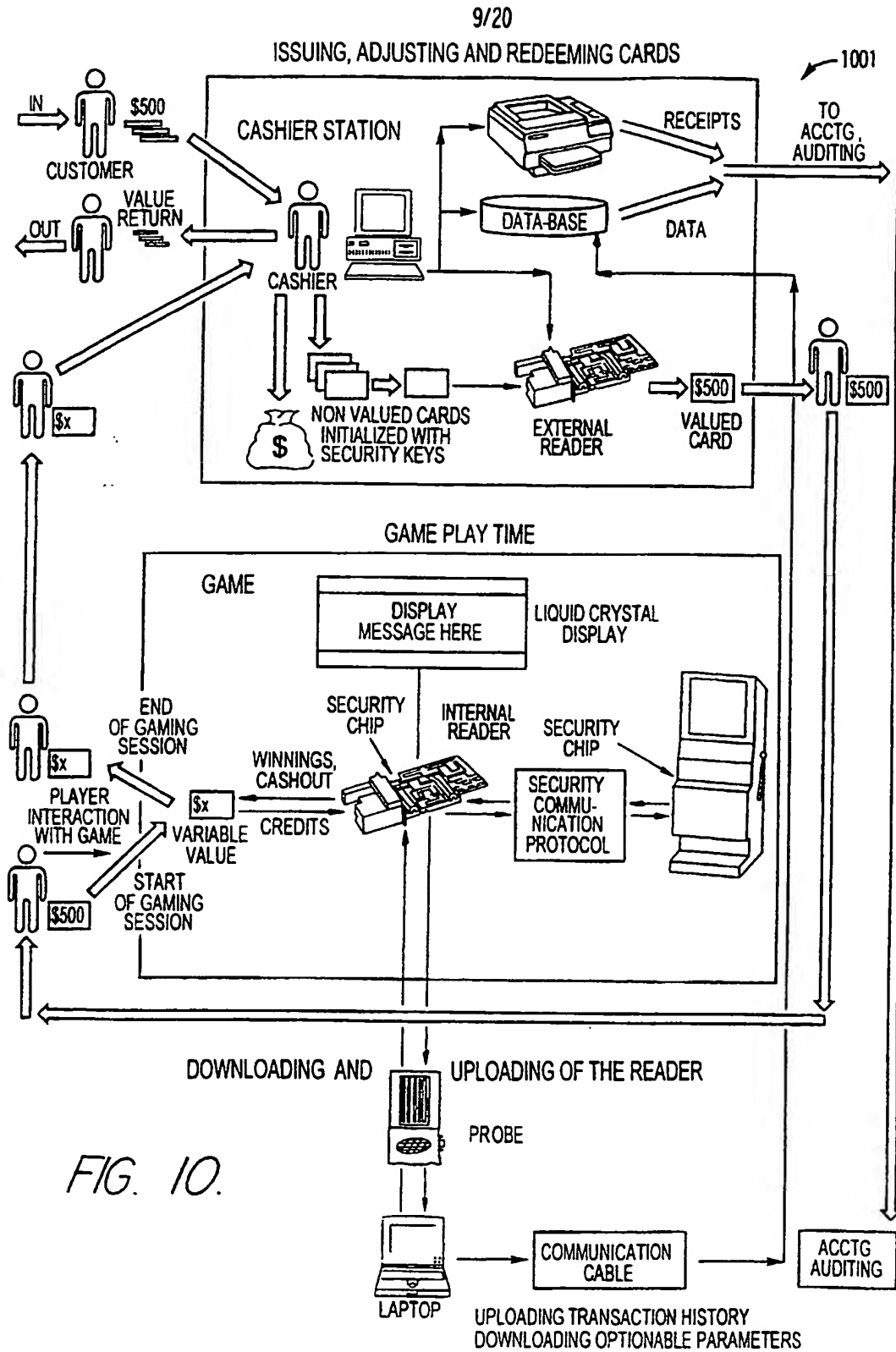


FIG. 9.



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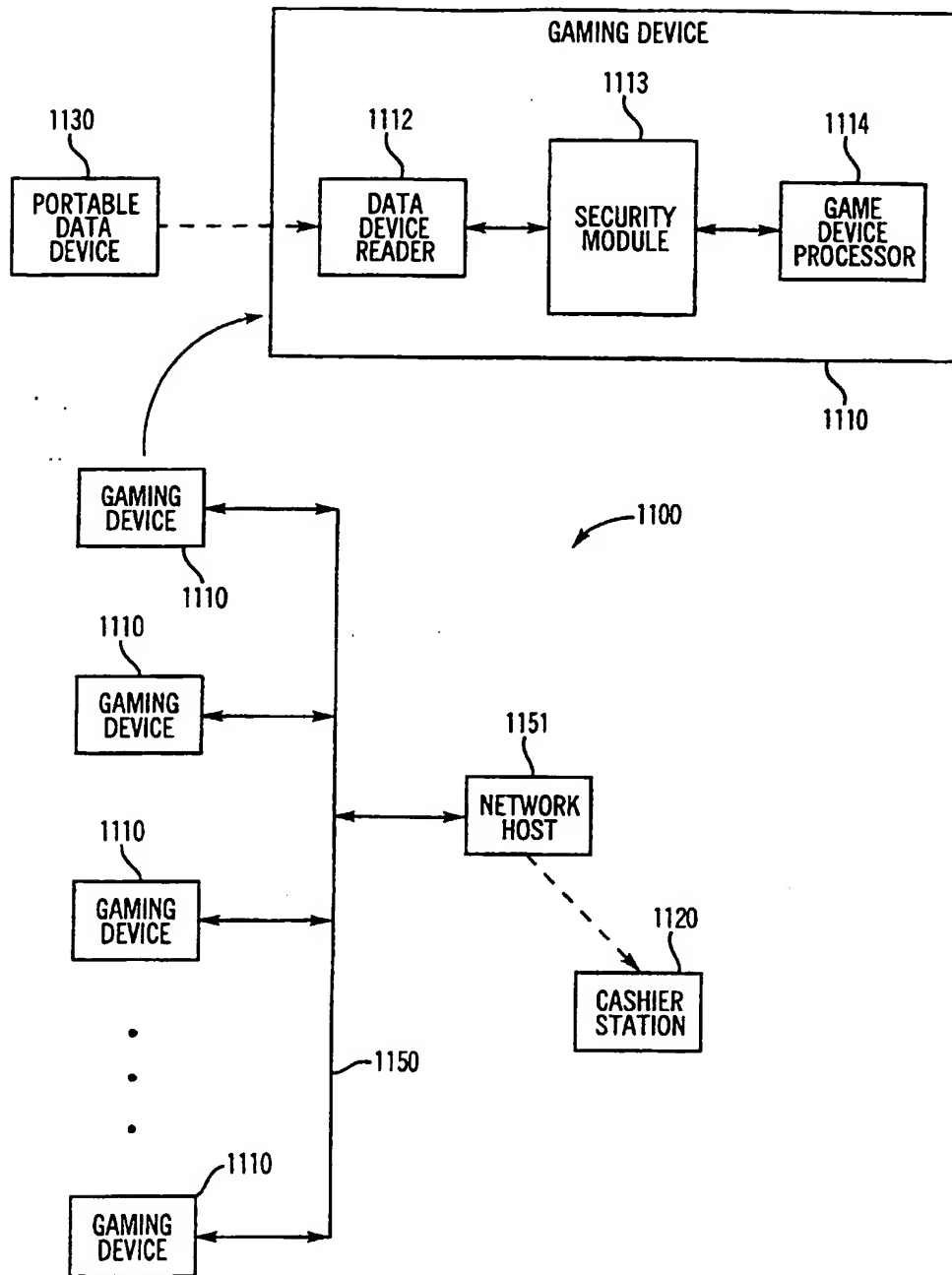


FIG. 11.

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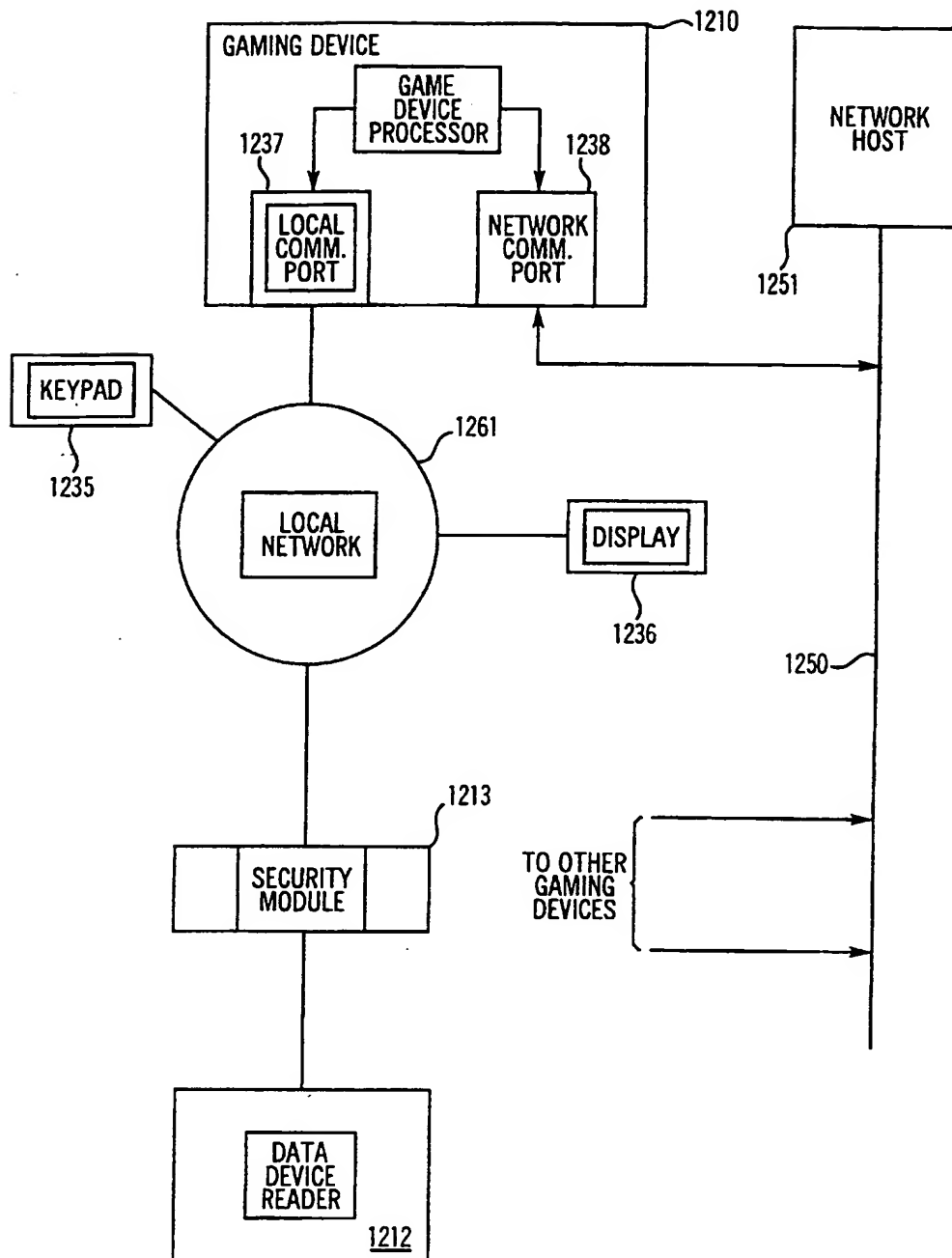


FIG. 12.

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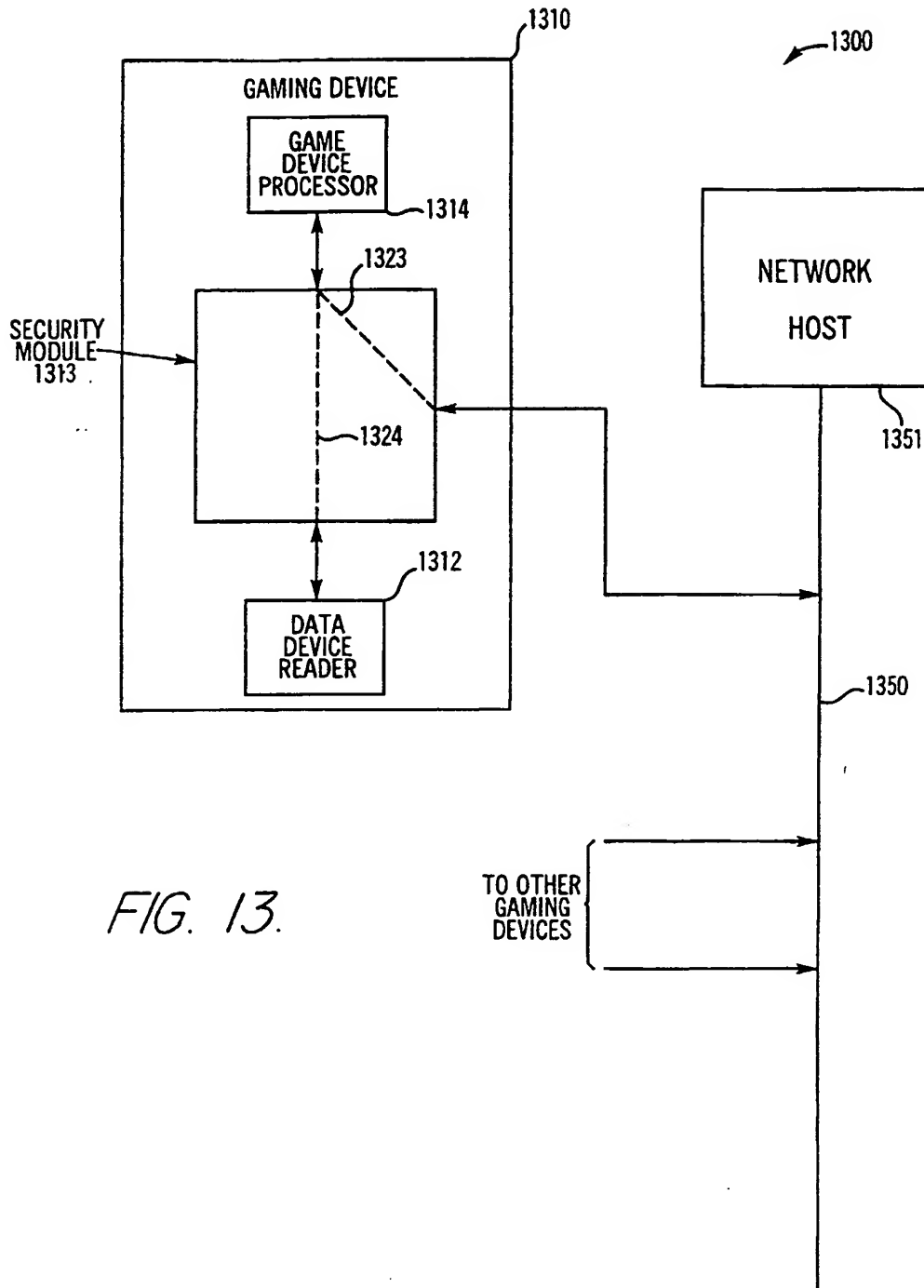


FIG. 13.

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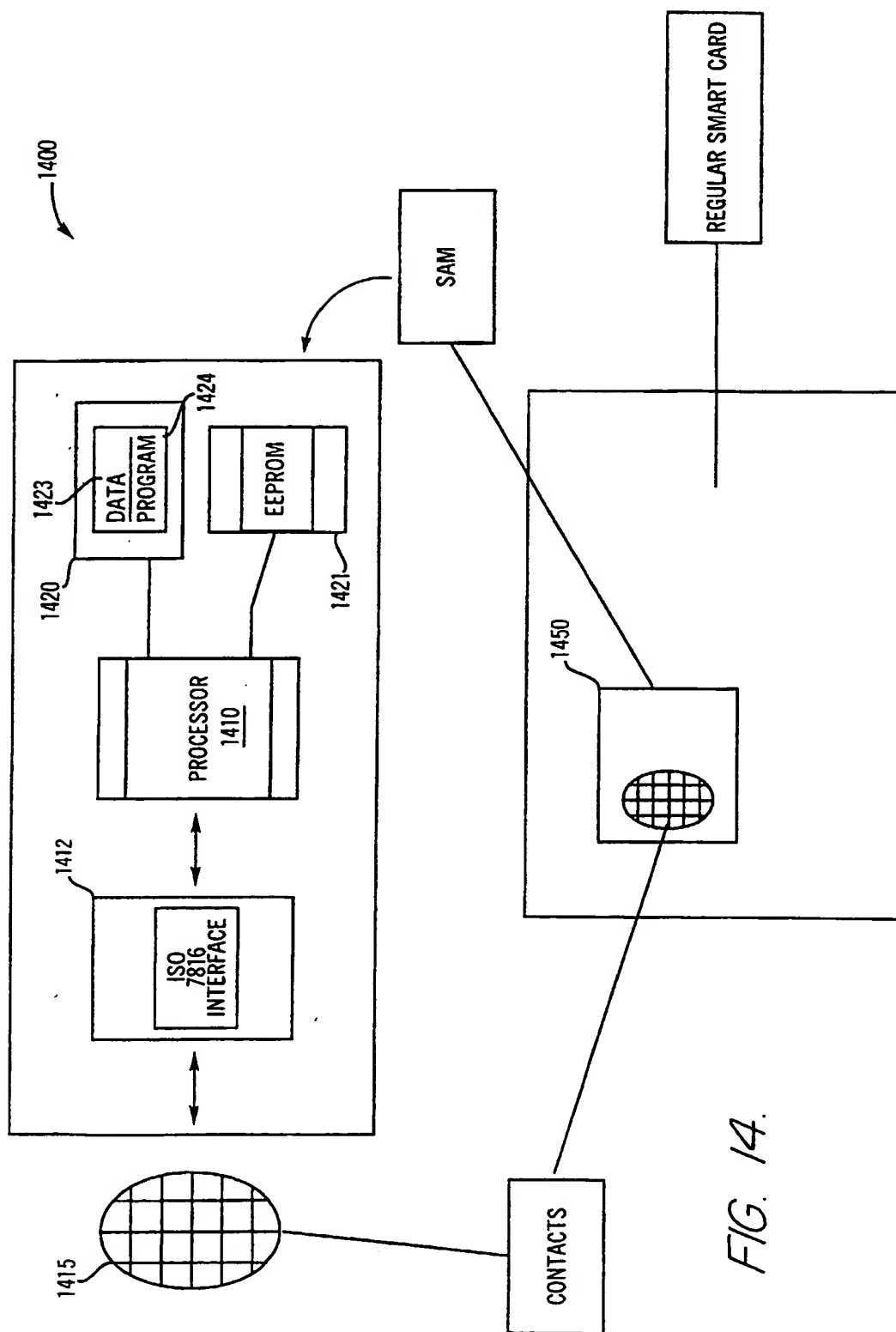
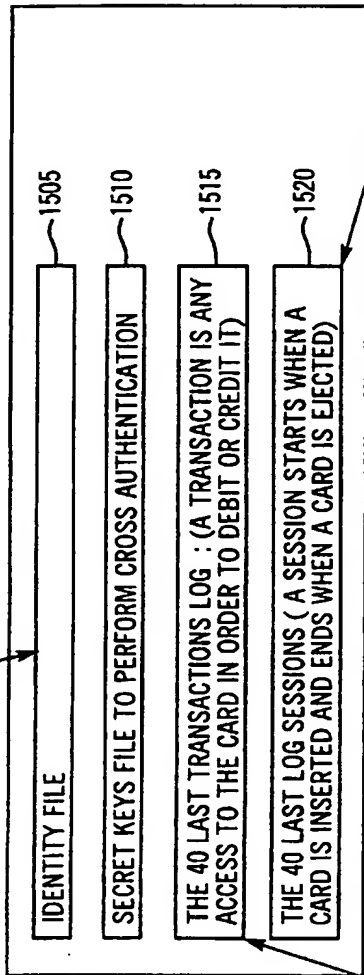


FIG. 14.

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USER CARD MAPPING

FIELD	PLAYER ID	ISSUE DATE	EXP. DATE	TITLE	LAST NAME	MIDDLE INITIAL	FIRST NAME	RETAIN VALUE	CARD NUM	CASINO ID	LANGUAGE ID
CODE	BCD	DATE	DATE	ASC	ASC	ASC	ASC	HEX	BCD	BCD	HEX
	0--	YY-MM-	YY-MM-								
FORMAT	999999	DD	DD								
BYTES	3	3	3	3	20	1	20	4	4	4	1



FIELD	SESSION NUMBER	MACHINE ID	TRANSACTION TYPE	CARD VALUE	CUMM. OUT	CUMM. PLAYED	CUMM. WON
CODE	HEX	HEX	HEX	HEX	HEX	HEX	HEX
	0--						
FORMAT	9999						
BYTES	2	4	2	4	4	4	4

FIELD	SESSION NUMBER	MACHINE ID	TRANSACTION TYPE	CARD VALUE	CUMM. OUT	CUMM. PLAYED	CUMM. WON
CODE	HEX	HEX	HEX	HEX	HEX	HEX	HEX
	0--						
FORMAT	9999						
BYTES	2	4	2	4	4	4	4

FIG. 15.

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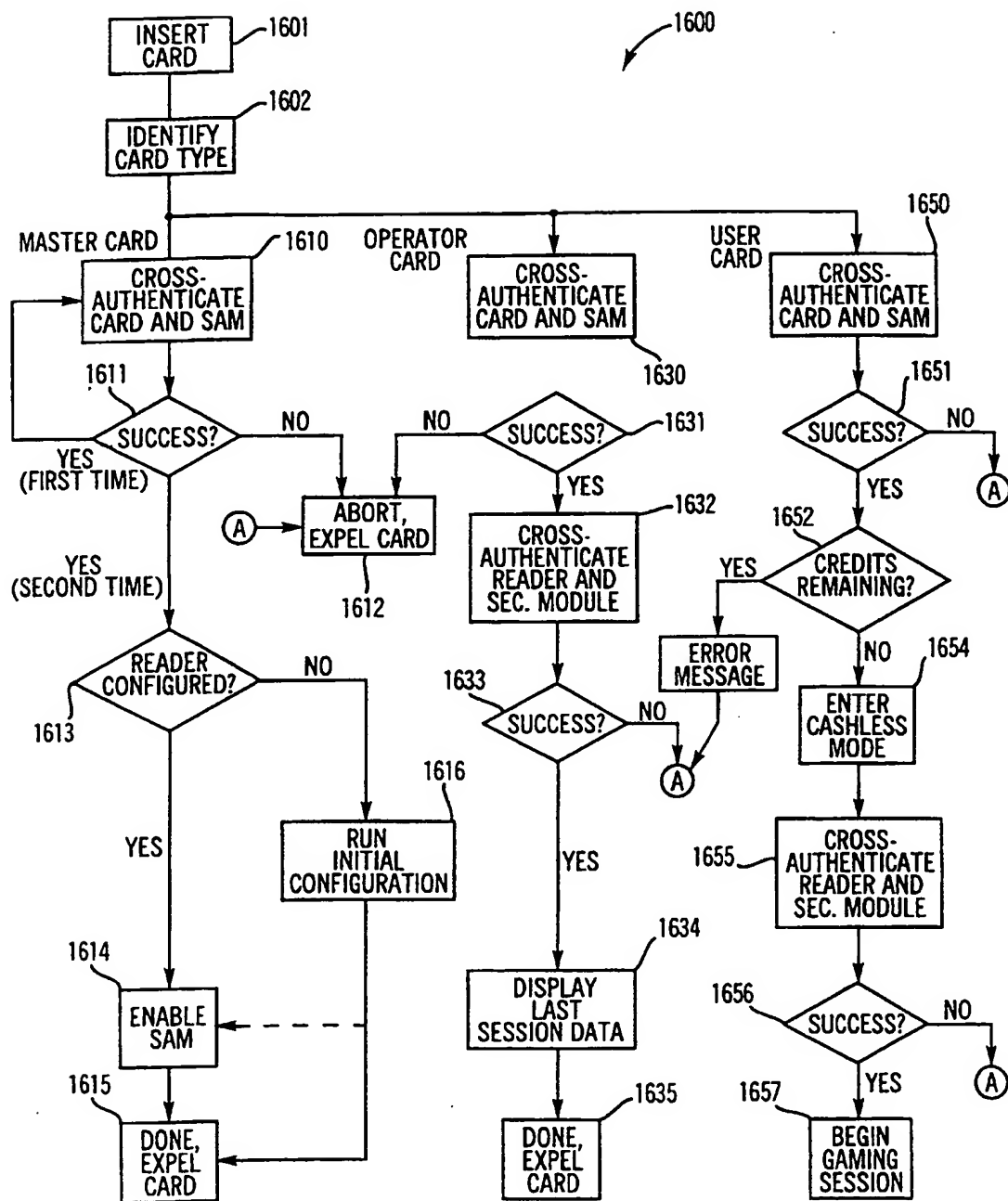


FIG. 16.

FIG. 17.

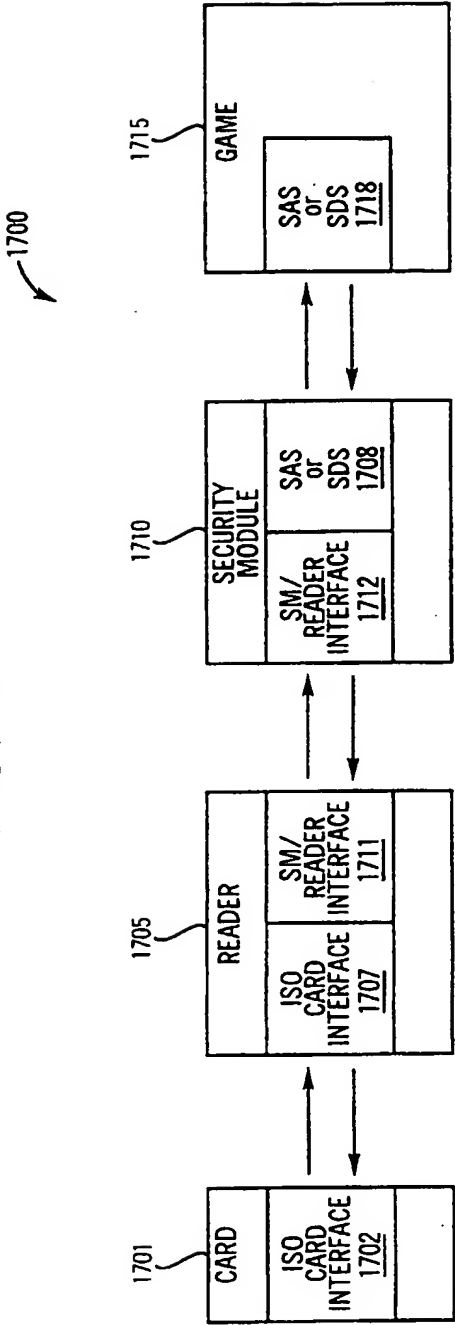
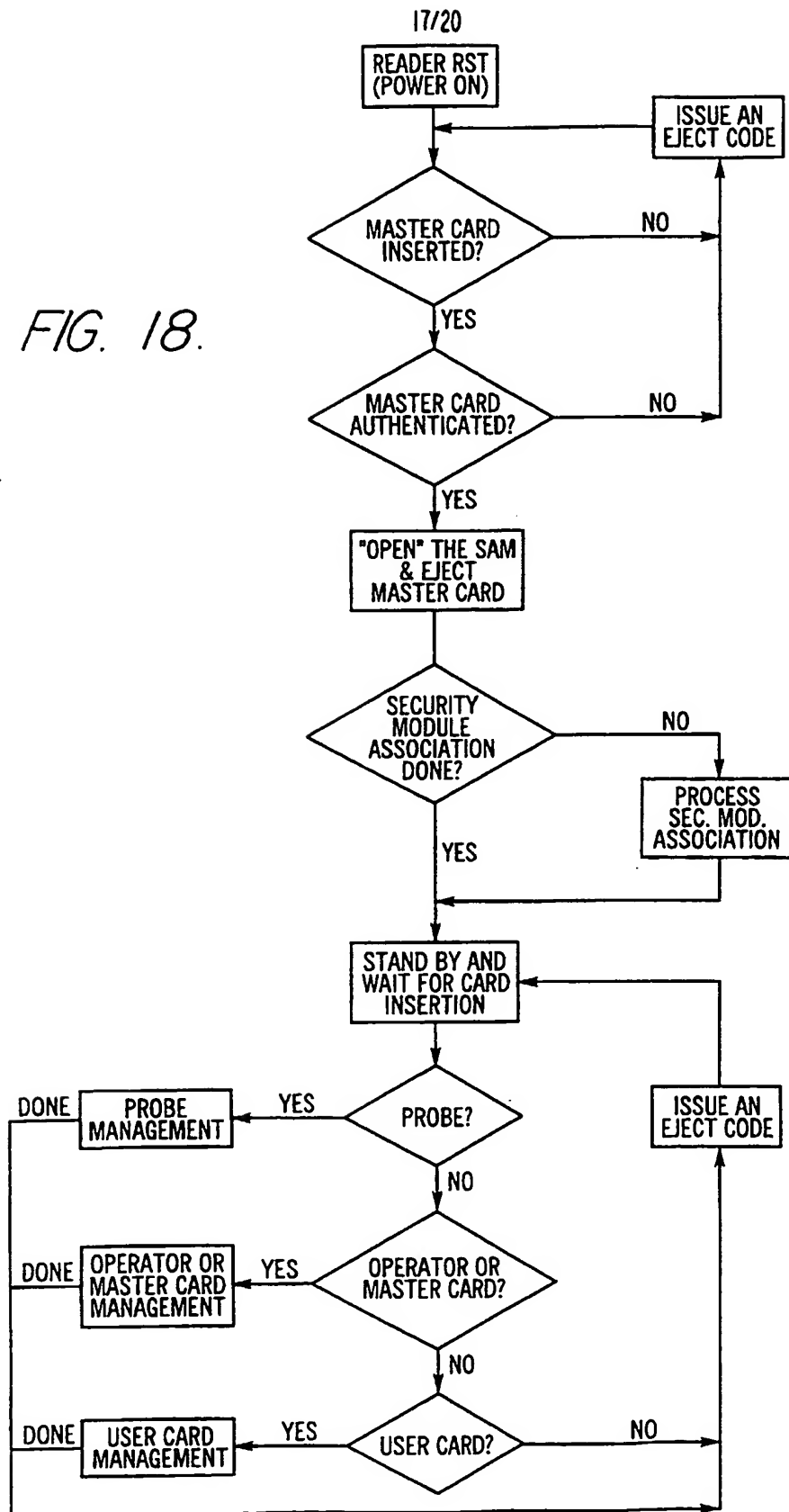
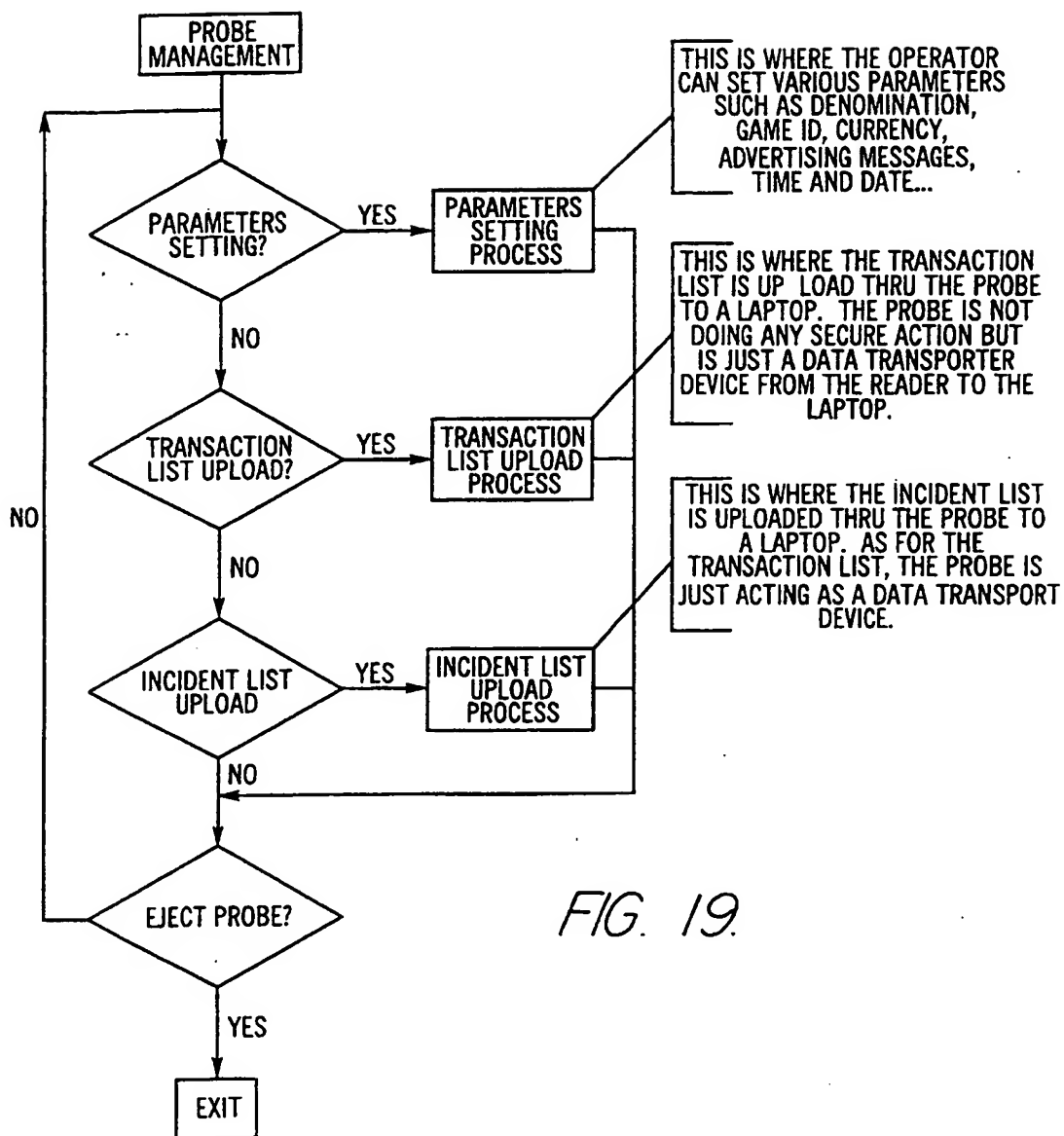


FIG. 18.

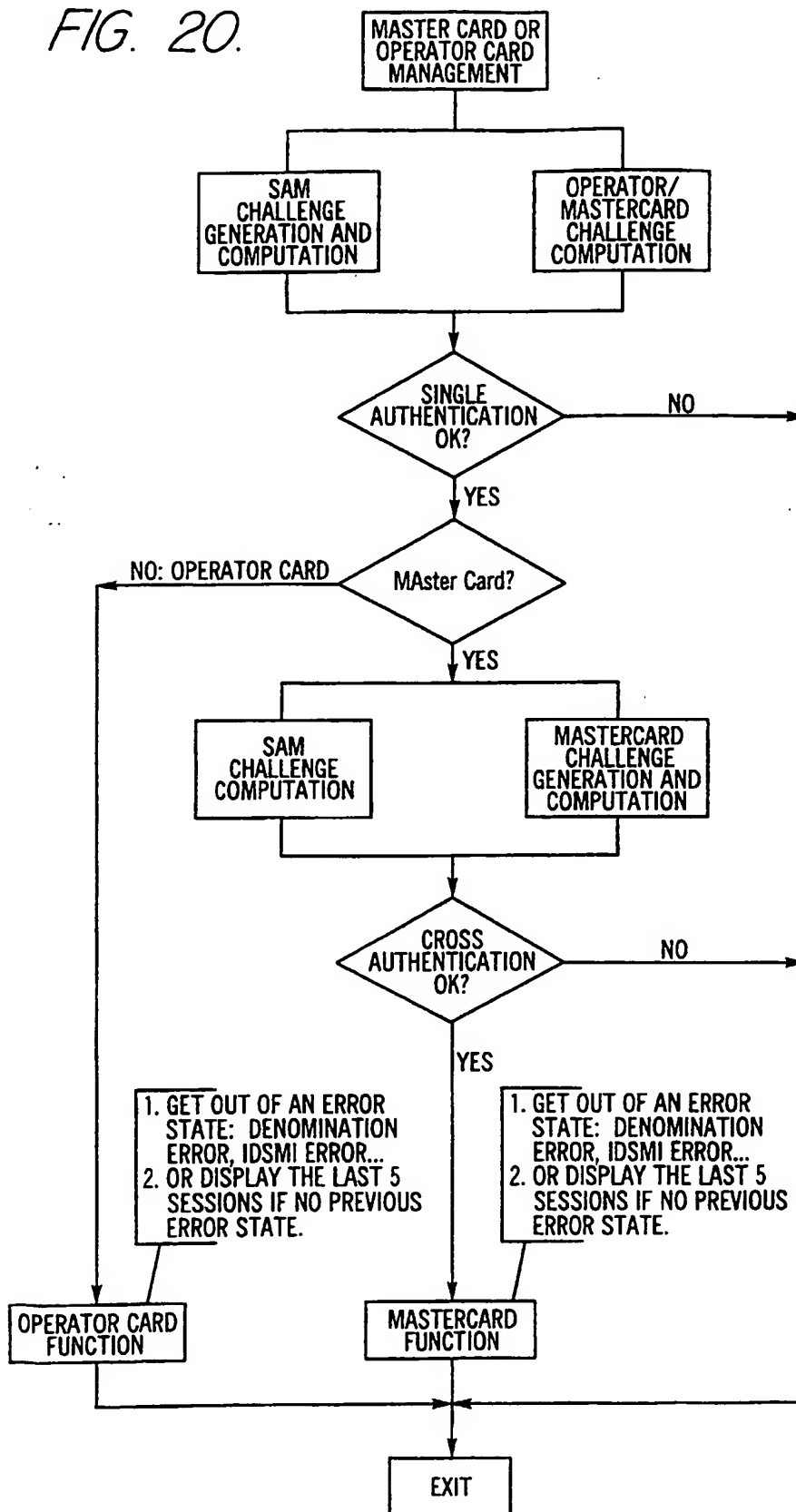


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FIG. 20.



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FIG. 21.

